

Executive Management Report to the Board

Q1 Activity (Jan-Feb-Mar 2025)

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T0 Live

PRESIDENT & CEO'S EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Q1 2025 marked one of the most successful first quarters in TO Live history – we achieved our artistic and community goals, and, for the first time ever, ended the quarter in a positive financial position. This milestone allows TO Live to move forward with key investments in Canadian artists planned for later this year, including our *explorations* grants and our ongoing *Making Space* program.

We're also proud to be partnering on the development of a new work by Canadian choreographer Aszure Barton and American jazz musician Ambrose Akinmusire. We look forward to deepening our investment into the local arts community and showcasing great Canadian artists on an international stage.

At the same time, we bid farewell to a valued member of the TO Live family. Our incredible VP of Operations, Matt Farrell, is moving on to a new role with the City of Toronto's Facilities Management team. Matt's leadership – especially with the challenges during the COVID pandemic – was instrumental in advocating for work regulations and safety standards in the live entertainment industry. We are deeply grateful for his contributions and have already begun the search for his successor. Thank you, Matt – you will be missed!

We also extend heartfelt thanks to departing Board members Mustafa Humayun, Myriam Gafarou, and Owais Lightwala. Each of you have played an integral role in providing expert guidance and support to the TO Live team, and have been vital in our success!

We look forward to discussing the future 2026 budget and plan at the next meeting.

All the best.



Clyde Wagner
President & CEO



PROGRAMMING

The first quarter of 2025 featured a wide array of activities across the Programming department.

TO Live Presents

- Two innovative physical performance works, [*Duck Pond*](#) and [*Dimanche*](#), pushed boundaries and entertained audiences in the Lyric Theatre.
- Globally celebrated Canadians, Ballet BC, returned to the Bluma Appel Theatre with a double bill featuring *Pieces of Tomorrow* and *PASSING*, works by two of the most distinguished creators of the dance world.
- [*Women in Song*](#) featuring Measha Brueggergosman-Lee, Tia Wood, and Zeb Bangash brought together vocalists, dancers and musicians representing cultural traditions from around the world to the George Weston Recital Hall.
- The always popular film and orchestra series featuring the TO Live Orchestra featured [*Titanic*](#) and [*How To Train Your Dragon*](#).

Making Space

- Through our **Making Space** initiative, in the first quarter of 2025 we supported 4 companies (Dance Immersion, The Unknown Floor Force, Studio 180 and Theatre Topikos) and 1 independent artist (Kelly Clipperton) through which, 320 individual artists were engaged with rehearsal spaces and technical residency support amounting to an in-kind value of CAD \$14,550.

Stage Rentals

- Meridian Hall, the go-to destination for top comedians in the world, welcomed Taylor Tomlinson, Rahul Dua and Matteo Lane.
- Major international touring artists performing concerts at Meridian Hall were Fish Leong (Malaysia,) Farzad Farzin (Iran,) and Ha*Ash (USA.)
- The St Lawrence Centre for the Arts was busy with *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* presented by Canadian Stage, *The Gondoliers* presented by Toronto Operetta Theatre and four concerts presented by Music Toronto (JACK Quartet, Rachel Fenlon, Illia Ovcharenko, Janina Fialkowska and Isadore Quartet.)
- The George Weston Recital Hall at the Meridian Arts Centre hosted multiple Orchestras, including Kindred Spirits Orchestra, Sinfonia, Mandel Philharmonic, Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra and The Toronto Symphony Orchestra with Angela Hewit.



Communities and Outreach

- **Xenia** Concerts continued with three concert dates within the quarter (Jazz is What?! (Jan), Bruce Petherick (Feb), Pantayo group (March), with a surge in turnout more than double Q1 of 2024 (from 224 to 640 in Q1 2025).
- Australian performing arts company *Circa* hosted a one-of-a-kind gymnastics workshop in connection to ***Duck Pond*** taking place in late February. Students from Rawlinson Community School began with warm-up games and were guided through various techniques and movements that culminated in a series of team-based balancing exercises, building trust and communication between students.
- During **March Break**, C&O facilitated two youth-centred, arts-based programs at the Meridian Arts Centre:
 - STOMP proceeded as our annual recurring, day-long March Break dance program in partnership with the Forestry, Parks and Recreation Department of the City of Toronto.
 - North York Arts collaborated to present Teen Art Hub, hosted in the Lower Gallery each day, and featured hands-on exercises and insightful guest talks for young emerging visual artists.

Corporate and Private Events

Strong Q1 with 13 corporate events, 4 featuring new companies. Outperformed forecast.

- New blue-chip event, CBRE Canada (Commercial Real Estate Services) took place in February at Meridian Hall and likely to recur.
- Idaho Productions returned to film their second and third episodes at Meridian Arts Centre, both five-day shoots.
- Legacy clients, Seneca College, St Clair College, Yorkville University and Nestle returned in Q1.

Production Services

- Now in its third year, TO Live's mentorship program continues to support Black, Indigenous, and other equity-deserving communities pursuing careers in Event and Live Entertainment Production. This year, the program expanded to include its first high school co-op student alongside final year post-secondary students.
- Production Services completed the majority of our annual safety and service inspections for the theatres and equipment. This included a thorough review of the fly systems, as well as the motors and winches that support them.
- A significant upgrade was completed on the Meridian Hall fly system's automation. Going beyond routine maintenance, the project included both software and component upgrades to significantly improve the system's performance and reliability.
- Renewed stage crew's certifications for *Working at Heights* and *Elevated Work Platforms*.



MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Marketing and Communications

- Recognized holidays of national and social/cultural importance on social media and digital signage, including New Year's, Family Day, Pink Shirt Day, Black History Month (artist Instagram takeovers by Malachi McCaskill & Amaka Umeh [*A Strange Loop*]), Eid, Lunar New Year, Holocaust Remembrance Day, and International Trans Day of Visibility.
- Created and shared content to highlight TO Live Presents shows, including:
 - Backstage with... artist Q&A featuring 3 artists from TO Live Presents shows, including:
 - [Rowan Allison](#) (from Duck Pond)
 - [Kiana Jung](#) (from Ballet BC)
 - [Eliana Cuevas](#)
 - TikTok/reel for [Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest](#)
 - TikTok/reel for [Titanic Live](#)
- TO Live created content highlighting a making space artist, Naishi Wang, who was in our spaces working on *Eyes Wide Open*:
 - [Making space for dancer and choreographer Naishi Wang](#)

Earned media highlights included:

- **Women In Song**
 - Your Morning, CTV – live in studio interview with Measha Brueggergosman-Lee
 - CP24 Breakfast [live in studio interview with Measha Brueggergosman-Lee](#)
 - AM 740 “Live in the City” radio interview with Lily Frost with Measha Brueggergosman-Lee
 - Ludwig Van interview with [Measha Brueggergosman-Lee Talks About Women In Song Coming Up March 7](#)
- **Ballet BC**
 - Review: [Globe and Mail “Ballet BC’s new tour straddles two approaches to dance”](#)
 - Radio interview with [Ballet BC AD Medhi Walerski Radio-Canada](#)

Ticket Services

- Ticketing activity is showing signs of settling into more consistent levels following the uncertain post-pandemic period, with Q1 of 2025 seeing approximately 118K ticketed attendees within the quarter, and approximately 115K new ticket booked during the quarter.
- Ticketing/Box Office support for external clients continued strong, with TO Live contracting to provide ticketing/box office for most of the Luminato 2025 season lineup (renewing a previous agreement from 2022 and 2023) and extending services at the Elgin & Winter Garden through to the end of Q1 2026.



- Following from updates made in 2024 Q4 to better support Invoicing and Pay-by-Link options for phone and in-person sales, additional training and focused implementation occurred in Q1 to get these processes into common use, helping expand options for serving patrons and better protecting against fraud and chargeback abuse.
- Pre-show welcome templates were updated and standardized across all spaces, better catering information to patrons based on their purchase type (Ticketmaster Host vs Archtics/Account Manager), employing a more consistent voice and layout across all venues, and activity promoting our SpotHero parking partnership.

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

Finance

- Completed year-end audit for 2024
- Finalized HST Compliance Audit with CRA
- Issued 2024 T4A-NR (Non-Residents)

Payroll

- Issued 1,100 2024 T4's and T4A's
- Continued preparation with payroll provider for new software platform

Information Technology

- Continued preparations for phone migration project from Mitel to Microsoft
- Ongoing preparation and testing for Microsoft Global Secure Access
- Ongoing preparation and testing for Geo Location security
- Completed Migration to Modern Authentication Methods in O365
- Completed STLC core network switch replacement project
- Completed Migration to Windows LAPS from Legacy Microsoft LAPS

Other

- Continued work on TO Live Programming contracts

HUMAN RESOURCES & ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

- 144 non-recoverable FTEs at the end of Q1 which was 2 (1.6%) more than the 2025 budgeted non-recoverable FTE of 141.8, and 110 recoverable FTEs at the end of Q1 which was 5 (4.5%) less than 2025 budgeted recoverable FTE of 115.
- 7 positions filled in Q1.
- Employee turnover was 2.2% in Q1 compared to 2.8% the same time last year. 20% of those who left had less than 1 year of service which was the same as 2024.
 - 11 employees left the organization last quarter
 - unspecified (63%), performance (18%), job employment/personal (9%)
 - those with tenure 1-3 years (27%), less than 6mths (27%), 5-10 years (18%) and 6mths – 1 year (18%) made up 90% of those who left the organization.



Training

- Compliance training (online)
 - 313 employees - *Addressing Racism in the Workplace Training for Employees*
 - 320 employees - *AODA Customer Service Standards Training (Comprehensive Content, Immersive)*
 - 307 employees - *Demonstrating Respect at Work Training*
 - 207 employees - *Unconscious Bias Training for All Audiences*
 - 300 employees - *Workplace Violence and Harassment Refresher Training for Employees & Supervisors (Ontario, Immersive)*
 - 51 employees – *WHIMS Training Comprehensive and New WHIMS Training*
- In-person Training:
 - Anti-islamophobia Training – Two in Person and one virtual
 - Antisemitism Training – Two in-person and one virtual
- Other Training:
 - Accident / Incident reporting training – 7 virtual sessions held

Indigenous Report Update:

- Conducted a second round of the “Spectrum of Indigenous Allies” activity with Senior Executives to identify priority groups to connect with.
- Partnered with the Director of the City of Toronto Indigenous Initiatives Office to build stronger connections and began to identify areas where we can work together.
- Partnered with Heritage Toronto and the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association to discuss the Shoreline project and plan for greater relationship-building and collaboration.

OPERATIONS

Facility Services

- Published RFP for Waste management and HVAC maintenance services
- Tested escalators, Category 1, at MH
- Inspected and serviced emergency power quintessential for all sites
- Completed corrective works on the hatchway gate access to hydro vault at MAC
- TSSA safety inspection of elevators at Meridian Hall.
- Carried out corrective works on the deficiencies from annual fire inspections across all sites.

Patron Services and Event Services

- Welcomed over 112,000 patrons across our three venues
- Piloted an intermission staff redeployment strategy at MAC to increase FOH team visibility in the lobby, enhancing audience engagement and optimizing customer service touchpoints during a critical time in the patron journey.



- Increased front-line visibility and support by reducing pre-show administrative duties, enabling more time on the floor assisting patrons and staff.
- Increased concessions sales from the same period last year, showing growth in customer spend. Average spending hit \$7 per person, a \$2 increase.
- Started sourcing reusable options to cut down on single-use paper and plastic in both concessions and catering services, an important step towards TO Lives' zero-waste goal.

Capital Projects

- Transition of capital project delivery from TO Live to CREM is underway.
- **Meridian Arts Centre highlights include:**
 - AODA Work Package 6 (Offices and Lunchrooms): Completed. Working on close-out documents and deficiencies.
 - AODA Work Package 7 (Back of House support Phase 1): Overall project is 80% completed. Lobby elevators scheduled for spring. Remaining loading dock elevator will be completed in fall.
 - AODA Work Package 8 (Venue Renovations): Phase 1 commenced and 90% completed. Phase 2 commenced and 20% completed.
 - Technical Theatres Improvements: 4 out of 5 subprojects are completed. Last project is in deficiency stage.
 - Rigging Replacement for GWRH and Lyric: Pre-work has been completed. Main scope scheduled for July and August 2025.
- **Meridian Hall highlights include:**
 - Door Replacement: Working on final tasks of the project along with closing documents.
 - AODA Projects – Work Package 5 (Lobby Washrooms Phase 2): Phase 1 completed. Phase 2 completed.
 - AODA Projects - Work Package 6 (Venue Renovations): Project commenced for work areas 1 & 2. Work area 1 is 60% and work area 2 is 30% completed. Multiyear project and completion is forecasted for summer 2026.
 - Exterior Envelope & Site Work: Project is 95% completed. Completing remaining deficiencies and close out documents.

DEVELOPMENT – Philanthropy & Corporate Sponsorship

- Government
 - Submitted grant applications to the Department of Canadian Heritage, Canada Council for the Arts, and Ontario Arts Council valued at \$165k in support of programming.
 - Major Gifts & Foundations
 - Submitted funding proposals totaling \$207,500 to private foundations and individual donors in support of TO Live programming.
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- Annual Giving
 - Launched a targeted fundraising campaign to support TO Live Dance programming
- Corporate Sponsorship
 - Renewed partnerships with Muskoka Brewery and Arterra Wines.
 - Secured new venue sponsorship with Arterra Wines as exclusive cider sponsor.
 - Submitted corporate sponsorship proposals totaling:
 - \$680k for programming initiatives
 - \$130k for venue-related opportunities
- Stewardship & Engagement
 - Hosted a public reception for the Women in Song to launch TO Live's Music at the MAC programming.
 - Held two private donor cultivation events
 - legacy giving event for prospective planned giving donors
 - launch event for the TO Live Dance campaign, hosted by Guillaume Côté and Veronica Tennant.
- Continued active cultivation of prospective sponsors, donors, and foundation partners across programming and venue initiatives.

TO Live Foundation and TO Live fundraising are separate entities.

StLC REDEVELOPMENT

- Continued to collaborate with TO Live Development department and Arts & Communications consultants to solicit naming of STLC and district
- Collaborated with TO Live team, CREM and Colliers to create transition plan and Agreements for Capital projects including STLC renovation
- Collaborated with Economic Development to continue public consultation regarding the future of STLC.

