President’s Report

It has been a great experience serving as President of the Board of Directors for Theatre Ontario. This year we have seen many positive changes occur for our organization.

The year started with an active dialogue with the Ontario Arts Council on funding and how the changing landscape is affecting arts organizations. Our funding situation has been a major driver of the positive changes that have taken place over the last year including a review and restructure to many of our service contracts, the partnering with the Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts and Playwrights Guild of Canada to move Theatre Ontario to our new location on Richmond Street, and the variety of new innovative workshops that have been created by internal staff as well as members of our Talent Bank.

As we progress, revenue generation is a must for Theatre Ontario to continue to provide our services, festivals, training, and support. The Board will continue to develop and support ideas that will help us provide value and create these funding opportunities.

Collaboration and partnership are key themes that are integral to the success of Theatre Ontario. As such, we have embarked on our first of a series of forums to help shape what is most needed by our member community theatre groups to ensure their growth and survival for years to come. We will then partner with the regional organizations (Western Ontario Drama League, Eastern Ontario Drama League, QUONTA, and the Association of Community Theatres—Central Ontario) to co-create solutions that can help these theatre groups thrive in their local communities. I am excited by the passion and idea sharing that has taken place so far on this initiative.

On a final note, I would like to thank Carol and the Theatre Ontario team. This has definitely been a year of change for all of us and Carol has led us in an extremely capable and dynamic fashion. I am very proud to be a representative of Theatre Ontario.

Cam Lund, President, Board of Directors
Treasurer’s Report

The Financial Statements of Theatre Ontario for the fiscal/calendar year 2012 have been accepted by the Board of Directors and are recommended to the membership as being an accurate summary of the financial transactions of the organization for 2012 (Statement of Operations) as well as an accurate reconciliation of our year-end position (Balance Sheet). The statements appear slightly differently this year because of requirements of the governing body of accounting standards (the details of which are included in note 3) which have had no effect other than cosmetic.

Basically Theatre Ontario is still operating satisfactorily in its day-to-day operations but has not yet overcome its underlining and undeniable systemic financial problem—the organization must generate more revenue in order to maintain the existing level of service to its membership.

Our staff, and in particular our Executive Director, have been extremely thorough in identifying and implementing cost savings within our operations. The net decline in year over year expenses of only $117 disguises the fact that an additional personnel expense of $21,000 was matched dollar for dollar by City of Toronto Employment programme grants. The overall savings was much greater.

The biggest disappointment of the year was the 10% decline in our Ontario Arts Council operating funding, a decline of $10,650. The biggest success was a 25% increase in Fundraising. All other sources showed a combined decline of $267 or %00.15.

Theatre Ontario continues to manage its programmes on a revenue-neutral or revenue-positive basis—in other words they either pay for themselves or generate money.

However, the general operating costs (salaries, rental, and office expenses) of Theatre Ontario continue to exceed their general operating revenue (operating grants, membership fees, and fundraising.) In this circumstance lies our inherent systemic financial dilemma. Over the past several years we have tried a number of solutions, but we have not yet found the unique and elusive resolution to this situation. If we reduce our general operating costs significantly, we run the very real risk of reducing our ability to perform our very significant and appreciable service to our membership. We must continue to search for a method of increasing our general operating revenue in order to maintain our viability.

John Goddard, Treasurer, Board of Directors
Executive Director’s Report

It is amazing to me that a year has gone by since our last Annual General Meeting - and a lot has happened in that time. As I have said before, I continue to be inspired and energized by the work that each of you does to create compelling theatre for audiences across the province. It is your inspiration that drives the team at Theatre Ontario to be equally creative in providing relevant and innovative programs and services to support you in your work.

Without doubt this is a challenging and transformative time for the arts, and theatre is no exception - but challenge begets innovation, and I believe collectively and individually we will find innovative ways to continue to tell our stories, whether it is our own narrative through words and actions or more complex political or social issues. The wonderful thing about the form of storytelling known as theatre is its immediacy—it brings people together to share, to be moved, to learn, to laugh, to cry to be entertained, to be provoked, to think, and to learn. In this digital age, theatre is a Mecca for bringing people together. Theatre contributes to our learning, literacy, our collective social consciousness, awakening us to issues whether social or political, issues that are at times within and beyond our frame of reference. Theatre is dynamic, relevant, and constantly evolving. With this in mind, I am pleased to announce that Theatre Ontario is evolving in order to meet the changing needs of our members and the theatre community, by taking the next step in our comprehensive strategic branding and organizational review entitled “Staging the Future - Advancing Leadership to Ontario’s Theatre Community.” This important project has been made possible by the generous funding support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, and we are looking forward to continuing the conversation with our members and stakeholders on sharpening our organizational focus to better enable us to help you during this time of transformational change.

It is our goal that we will be able to effectively link the spectrum of diverse theatre communities across Ontario, developing advisory councils that will enable us to be open and inclusive to the cultural, social, and economic diversity of our province. Our refined business model and reconfigured internal structures will allow us to be agile and adapt quickly, and help position us as a leader within the Canadian and international theatre scene. This means that practitioners at every stage of their career and involved in every kind of theatre will be able to easily locate and access the support and networks that will help accelerate their careers, and engage with the communities where they live and work. Thank you again to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for their valuable support that is making this project possible.

Providing relevant programs…. 

In 2012 we expanded our workshop series, and have continued to do so for 2013. Last year in addition to our Summer Theatre Intensive residential courses, we ran over 20
workshops, of which 9 were brand new additions! I would like to thank the many amazing facilitators from our Talent Bank who made this possible, and I would particularly like to thank Pat Bradley and the Ontario Arts Council for partnering with us to facilitate grant writing workshops regionally - it has been a terrific bonus for our members and local arts communities. This year we have added a number of new workshops, including a Legal Series with entertainment lawyer Sarah Farrell who is facilitating workshops and providing informative articles on issues that affect how theatre organizations operate such as: anti-spam legislation, Ontario’s Not-For-Profit Corporations Act, Accessibility—Ontarians with Disabilities Act. The variety and depth of our workshops is tremendous—playwriting, directors intensives, ask an agent, social media, crowdfunding, audition workshops, financial basics for artists.... Keep an eye on our website, blogs, and e-newsletter for workshop updates.

One of our big goals for 2013 is to have our informational workshops available to our members via webinar—this will benefit our members by enabling them to attend valuable workshops from the comfort of their own home or theatre/ studio space, and increase our ability to effectively serve widespread geographic communities.

We have begun a series of Forums that we will be holding across the province in collaboration with our regional theatre members. The initial forum was co-presented by Theatre Ontario and ACT-CO, and was facilitated by Lucy White, Executive Director of PACT and Carol Beauchamp, Executive Director of Theatre Ontario. We worked collectively and in small groups to begin to frame and answer the question: “What challenges can we identify that we can collectively address to work towards a successful future?” The second in the series was held at Theatre Ontario Festival in Kingston Ontario, and facilitated by Carol Beauchamp and Deb Sholdice, General Manager of the Blyth Festival and a member of Theatre Ontario’s Board of Directors.

The purpose of the Forums is to create a dialogue throughout the region and the province that will enable us to build a platform to share ideas and information, as well as developing partnerships to provide learning and training opportunities. The dialogue that we are creating will help us collectively build towards a more sustainable future for theatre in Ontario. The third forum is scheduled for June 17th, and will take place in Georgetown and we are looking forward to holding forums in the north, southwest, and east of the province.

The summer is always busy with our ASTRO members seasons (Association of Summer Theatres ‘Round Ontario) in full swing and offering wonderful theatre in some scenic parts of the province. In the fall we coordinated central auditions for our ASTRO members, which proved very successful. This year, we are focusing on driving traffic to the ASTRO website via social media, with Brandon and Bruce working on the website administration and social media respectively - please visit http://www.summertheatre.ca to learn more.

Each year Theatre Ontario hosts an annual Showcase event - this event is an opportunity for the graduate classes of post-secondary theatre conservatory programs to showcase their talent for agents, casting directors and independent directors, as
well as attend panel discussions with some of the industry’s professional leaders. This much anticipated event is a highlight for graduating students, with over 250 students performing over two days. This year was no exception, with panellists including Matthew Jocelyn, Artistic Director of Canadian Stage, casting directors Jenny Lewis and Sara Kay from Lewis Kay Casting (CBC series, Republic of Doyle); agent Pam Winter from Gary Goddard Agency and Artistic Director Allen MacInnis, Young People’s Theatre. One of the highlights this year was the addition of a networking party giving the students an opportunity to mix with the attending agents and directors at the conclusion of the event, which was generously sponsored by Sheridan College and Jack Astor’s.

Our online resources always play a crucial role for our members, and our audition listings continue to come up trumps for members like Allie Dunbar, who landed a great gig with 4th Line Theatre last summer:

“I have to give a shout out & thanks to Theatre Ontario, without whom I would not have even found out about the auditions for the part of ‘Clare Dubrey’.” (Allie Dunbar’s Blog June 2012)

I would be remiss if I did not highlight the difference the Professional Theatre Training Program (PTTP) and the Youth Theatre Training Program (YTTP) grants funded by the OAC, continue to make to the lives of emerging professional artists and artists making a career transition, and in the YTTP in the lives of the youth that these program grants help to make a reality:

I have lived all over the country and I have never seen a program that challenges and inspires kids the way this one does. Angola, in my heart and mind is truly a master what she does for these kids. Funding for the arts is always low or being cut altogether, this program not only helps children with physical activity but with mental health as well. By building their physical capabilities it also builds their self esteem. I only wish more kids could experience the adventure my daughter did and she still asks “can I go next summer mom???” Parent Testimonial of a participant in YTTP grant recipient Lookup Theatre’s program held in Owen Sound, 2012.

The team at Theatre Ontario will continue to develop new programs and services that anticipate and respond to the evolving needs of theatre artists and theatre companies—that’s why we like to hear from you—keep in touch, let us know how we can help you.

Raising our profile and advocating for our members….

Theatre Ontario is an active member of the PASO Coalition (Provincial Arts Service Organization Coalition), and as such, Theatre Ontario and many of our members were active in the “Arts Days in the Ridings”. This was an opportunity for arts organizations to speak with their MPP’s in their ridings about the value of funding for
the arts, and how it benefits our communities, whether they are in large urban centres like Toronto, or smaller regional communities. There were a total of 32 MPP meetings, of which Theatre Ontario staff and/or members took part in 9 of those meetings. I had the pleasure of being part of a small delegation who met with Assistant Deputy Minister of Culture Kevin Finnerty in January to discuss arts funding for the provincial budget that was just recently released. As you all know, funding in this budget remained fairly static, which at this time of government spending cuts, we considered a real win. I will continue to work closely with the PASO Coalition - joining forces to advocate for strong provincial funding support for the arts.

Theatre Ontario has been actively building new partnerships and collaborations, working closely with other arts services organizations to share best practices and resources that can benefit our members, as well as co-producing workshops like Business Basics (Work in Culture), Financial Planning for Artists (JVS), Playwright-in-Person at Festival (Playwrights Guild of Canada and the Canada Council) and of course the wonderful panel discussion at our AGM in partnership with CPAMO (Cultural Pluralism in Performing Arts Movement Ontario.) I would like to thank Charles Smith for inviting me to sit on CPAMO’s advisory committee. I continue to serve on ArtsBuild Ontario’s Advisory Committee, and our members have many shared opportunities offered to them through ArtsBuild, as well as the portal which gives a great overview of arts spaces in the province.

Amending our business model to create financial sustainability...

Last year we made a number of significant changes to reduce our expenses whilst increasing our overall level of service. We re-negotiated a number of contracts including our telephone, internet, debit/credit, and most significantly, moved to our new offices at 401 Richmond Street West which reduced our lease and storage rental costs, but still gives us a flexible and serviceable space which we share with four other arts service organizations. This has afforded us the opportunity to sublet part of our space, further helping to offset our costs.

We are continuing through our “Staging the Future” (funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation) to build a strong value proposition that we anticipate will encourage sponsorship of our programs and services from the corporate sector - programs and services that we want to grow and develop to respond to the increasing demand in need from our members.

With this in mind, on behalf of the staff and Board of Theatre Ontario, I extend a huge thank you to our esteemed donors whose valuable contributions support many of Theatre Ontario’s programs and services, and I would ask that you join me in raising a cheer to their thoughtful, generous and sustaining contributions! I would most particularly like to thank posthumously the thoughtful generosity of Dorian Mary Rankin who made a most generous legacy gift to Theatre Ontario of over $50,000. This incredible gift will enable us to develop our webinar program which will benefit community theatre groups and individuals across the province. Dorian and her husband William Rankin were actively involved with Theatre Night In Merrickville and
the Eastern Ontario Drama League for many years, as well as being strong supporters of Theatre Ontario—thank you!

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the terrific support that we receive from the Ontario Arts Council, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, and the Toronto Arts Council as well as the support of our private sponsors including Sun Life Financial, Culture One, Sheridan College, Jack Astor’s and Alumnae Theatre—we could not do it without you! Thanks also to the many theatre companies that provide ticket discounts to members of Theatre Ontario—these are valuable discounts, I hope you will make use of them the next time you catch a show.

**Strengthening our governance …**

We have a terrific Board of Directors, and I would like to thank our Board President Cam Lund for his leadership and support, and acknowledge the individual members of the Board including: Kenny Chan, Barry Freeman, John Goddard, Elley-Ray Hennessy, Tabitha Keast, Helen Landry, Mark Mooney, Kristina Nicoll, Liz Schell, Deb Sholdice, Ken Stephen, and Joanne Williams. A special acknowledgement goes to Julianne Snepsts for her nine years of service on Theatre Ontario’s Board including three as Board President, one as Past President—thanks for everything Julianne.

Our Board is committed to continuous improvement both for the organization and its governance model—so that our governance reflects our evolving community and the changing needs of our members. The Board is intimately involved in our “Staging the Future Project”, and will be working closely with our project facilitators Jane Marsland, Corien Kershey and myself.

**Our team …**

I would like to thank our staff team at Theatre Ontario for their hard work and dedication over the last year. Special thanks to Brandon Moore our Communications Coordinator, Cornelia Persich our Education Coordinator, and Anne Mooney our Community Theatre Coordinator. We have welcomed Aeriol Fitzgerald (Membership Coordinator) and Bruce Pitkin (Outreach Coordinator) who will be part of the team until February 2014 - our team’s contributions and dedication to our members are second to none.

On a special note, we say goodbye this year to Tim Chapman, our Professional Theatre Coordinator whose compassion, insights, dedication and commitment have benefited many artists through his counsel and well-run programs for the professional theatre community including coordinator with our ASTRO members, administering the Professional Theatre Training Program and the Youth Theatre Training Program, the Neil Munro Intern Directors Project at the Shaw Festival and our Annual Showcase. Please join me in wishing Tim a wonderful (semi) retirement—we will miss you!

We are now in the process of recruiting for this key position, which you will find posted on our website.
In Closing…

The arts sector is being heavily impacted by the transformational changes taking part in our society, and art of theatre is no exception. We must create both individual and collective innovations to light up our world with great stories and performances - to share, laugh, cry, celebrate, think, politicize, and learn. We at Theatre Ontario are committed to working collaboratively to create shared learning and innovations!

Carol Beauchamp, Executive Director

Staff Reports

Tim Chapman, Professional Theatre Coordinator

After seven years as Theatre Ontario’s Professional Theatre Coordinator, I am heading off into semi-retirement. It has been a privilege to work with so many different players in the Ontario theatre community, and I have truly loved helping so many emerging theatre artists get a foothold in our professional theatre world. I leave Theatre Ontario in good hands with our permanent team of Carol, Brandon, Cornelia and Anne, as well as Bruce and Aeriol.

We do theatre because we love it. We certainly do not do it for the money. I will always be a theatre lover so I will not say good bye. I will see you at the theatre. Or, after the performance, for a drink or two.

Aeriol Fitzgerald, Membership Coordinator

A Warm Hello from Membership!

We are always working at supporting our current members and reaching out to new members through our various initiatives. For example, we have instituted a Welcome/Touching Base Call to all of our new members from the past year and those who have renewed after more than a year of absence, where we get to know and support them through a short survey, and walk them through our services and website by way of a Getting the Most Out of Your Membership Flyer.

We are also busy instituting recommendations from our fundraising consultant Jill Planche which we hope to translate into increased funding for our programs.
**Anne Mooney, Community Theatre Coordinator**

Theatre Ontario held its third Introduction to Adjudication course at the Western Ontario Drama League Festival in Guelph. Ron Cameron-Lewis facilitated, and was impressed with the participants. The next step for the “interns” is conducting “trial” adjudication. I love this part—everyone benefits—the host groups discuss their production with intern adjudicators who have an educated eye, and the interns work with a mentor to enhance their adjudication skills.

A new focus for community theatres is the innovative Community Theatre Forum series: facilitated discussions between members of different community theatre groups. Well-attended Forums have already occurred in Aurora and at the Theatre Ontario Festival, and I am busily planning Forums in other areas of the province.

My favourite part of the community theatre season is Theatre Ontario Festival, which last year was hosted by QUONTA and Theatre SMC in Sault Ste Marie, with wonderful productions from Richmond Hill, Espanola, Guelph, and Peterborough.

**Brandon Moore, Communications Coordinator**

Communicating with Ontario’s vast and diverse theatre community continues to be immensely challenging—and just as immensely rewarding.

Our social media strives to be truly “social” as I try to be a community engager, rather than a community manager: listening and speaking, hearing your needs and your stories, sharing announcements and ideas of value. Our blog continues to evolve as a way of both delivering “news you can use” and sharing stories about theatre in Ontario and beyond. Our monthly enewsletter is a comprehensive email for busy artists and arts workers; and our website is an extensive resource for members and the community.

I know first-hand of all the demands for your attention—they’re probably similar to mine—so I endeavour always to be a respectful, compelling communicator on Theatre Ontario’s behalf. So thanks for that attention.
Cornelia Persich, Education Coordinator

As the Education Coordinator, I have been busy working with Bruce Pitkin, our Outreach Coordinator and staff team to develop our workshop series for the coming year. Since January we have offered 11 workshops, 3 granting information sessions, 1 full-week course, and 2 community theatre discussion forums. Locations served have been: Thunder Bay, Blyth, Toronto, Ottawa, Aurora, Kingston, and Burlington. Our annual upcoming Summer Theatre Intensive will be held at Wilfrid Laurier University in August, and I am really looking forward to getting to know new participants and catching up with regular enthusiasts.

Bruce Pitkin, Community Outreach Coordinator

I am excited to continue developing the Workshop Series, expanding to create a wide variety of offerings, not only to our membership, but to the greater artistic community as well, across the province. We’re working to extend the Theatre Ontario brand to creative and administrative practitioners, by articulating and encouraging engagement, through participation and collaboration. To this end we are working to employ a greater use of online tools, such as: the virtual delivery of certain workshops and seminars; a dynamic YouTube presence with timely content; the gathering of essential feedback from participants; and developing efficiencies in how we target and distribute our information about our offerings.
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**Staff**

Executive Director ............................................................. Carol Beauchamp
Professional Theatre Coordinator ................................................ Tim Chapman
Membership Coordinator .......................................................... Aeriol Fitzgerald
Community Theatre Coordinator ............................................... Anne Mooney
Communications Coordinator.................................................... Brandon Moore
Education Coordinator............................................................. Cornelia Persich
Community Outreach Coordinator ............................................. Bruce Pitkin

Theatre Ontario ● 401 Richmond Street West, Suite 350 ● Toronto, ON ● M5V 3A8
info@theatreontario.org ● www.theatreontario.org