ANNUAL REPORT
2018-2019
Here at Theater Latté Da, we have long tended to our deep roots in Minneapolis – a rigorous commitment to hiring Minnesota artists, welcoming our neighbors with our $13 for 13 ticket program, and offering the Ritz Theater as an affordable rental space for local non-profits. Even as we tend to these roots, we are also broadening our national reach.

Our 2018-19 season was Theater Latté Da’s biggest yet, serving nearly 40,000 people with mainstage productions, and featuring 315 Minnesota artists. The season also saw our Off-Broadway debut with a critically lauded production of our original docu-musical *All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914* at the Sheen Center for Thought and Culture, which received the 2019 Drama Desk Award for Unique Theatrical Experience. The production caught the attention of PBS, who will film *All is Calm* during its run at the Ritz Theater in December 2019 for national broadcast in 2020. We are thrilled to welcome PBS to our home in Northeast Minneapolis, and for viewers across the country to experience this moving and powerful work.

Minnesota artists continue to be the backbone of Latté Da’s work and are among the most sought-after talent in the country. In May 2019, Asolo Repertory in Sarasota, FL remounted Theater Latté Da’s production of *Sweeney Todd*, featuring a dozen Minnesota artists. And, in June, I was invited by playwright Terrence McNally to direct the world premiere of his latest legendary play *Immortal Longings* at ZACH Theatre in Austin, TX.

I am continually humbled and honored by the support of this community. I hope you’ll enjoy reading the following pages and seeing what your loyalty, patronage, and investment have made possible. We couldn’t do it without you.

Gratefully,

Peter Rothstein
Co-Founder/Artistic Director
ONCE
Sept 12 - Oct 27, 2018
Book by Enda Walsh
Music & Lyrics by Glen Hansard & Markéta Irglová
Based on the Motion Picture Written and Directed by John Carney
Directed by Peter Rothstein
Music Direction by Jason Hansen
Choreography by Kelli Foster Warder
Starring Britta Ollmann & Ben Bakken

“The story takes place over just six short days, yet the Guy and the Girl are forever changed. Because their brief intersection is a profound one. Because they awaken something in each other; they inspire each other; they make beautiful music together.”
- Peter Rothstein

“A lot of heart...as well as some marvelous musicianship.”
- The Pioneer Press

“Music is a love affair in ONCE.”
- Star Tribune

Scenic Design by Michael Hoover
Photo by Dan Norman. Rehearsal photos by Emilee Elofson.
ALL IS CALM
Holiday 2018
Written by Peter Rothstein
Vocal Arrangements by Erick Lichte and Timothy C. Takach
Directed by Peter Rothstein
Music Direction by Erick Lichte

“The heroes of this story are the lowest of the ranks - the young, the hungry, the cold, and the optimistic - those who acted with great courage to put down their guns, overcoming a fear that placed a gun in their hands in the first place. Their story puts a human face on war, and that's the story I hope to tell.”
- Peter Rothstein

“A beautiful musical recounting of a World War I cease-fire of gifts, poetry, and melody.”
- The New York Times

“A brilliant show that you should see immediately.”
- The Daily Beast

“WINNER
DRAMA DESK AWARDS
UNIQUE THEATRICAL EXPERIENCE, 2019”

Photo by Dan Norman
A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC

Jan 23 – Mar 10, 2019

Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim
Book by Hugh Wheeler
Orchestrations by Jonathan Tunick
Suggested by a Film by Ingmar Bergman
Originally Produced and Directed on Broadway by Harold Prince

Directed by Peter Rothstein
Music Direction by Jason Hansen
Choreography by Heidi Spesard-Noble

Starring Sally Wingert & Mark Benninghofen

"Theater Latté Da hits all the right notes."
- City Pages

"Crystalline in its storytelling and flat-out gorgeous to behold."
- The Pioneer Press

"Isn’t it rich?
Are we a pair?
Me here at last on the ground,
You in mid-air,
Where are the clowns?"
- “Send in the Clowns,” Stephen Sondheim

Scenic Design by Joel Sass
CANDIDE
March 20 - 24, 2019
The Royal National Theatre Version
Music by Leonard Bernstein
Book adapted from Voltaire by Hugh Wheeler
In a New Version by John Caird
Lyrics by Richard Wilbur
Additional Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, John Latouche, Lillian Hellman, and Leonard Bernstein
Directed by Peter Rothstein
Music Direction by Philip Brunelle
Starring Bradley Greenwald, Liv Redpath, and Phineas Bynum

“When Philip Brunelle approached me about collaborating on a semi-staged production, I jumped at the opportunity. Bernstein’s CANDIDE is a demanding work, both musically and theatrically. It wants an epic chorus. The idea presented a unique opportunity for Theater Latté Da audiences to experience a rarely-produced masterpiece.”

- Peter Rothstein

“Undoubtedly a masterpiece, a fact fully confirmed in Rothstein’s wonderfully imaginative production.”

- Star Tribune

“The CANDIDE we’ve been waiting for.”

- The Pioneer Press
“As a closeted transgender kid, my whole world changed the first time I stole a glance at a HEDWIG VHS in my hometown Blockbuster at age 12 (and was immediately reprimanded for looking at it). 18 years later, she’s still my perfectly imperfect patron saint of resilience in the face of hardship, of wholeness in the face of loss, of making your own rules and taking your own space. She’s the hero I never knew I needed, and can’t imagine living without.”

- Jay Owen Eisenberg (Yitzak)
“TO LET GO AND FALL”
May 29 - June 30, 2019
Written by Harrison David Rivers
Original music by Jelloslave cellists Jacqueline Ultan and Michelle Kinney
Directed by Sherri Eden Barber
Choreography by Penelope Freeh
Starring André Shoals & Mark Benninghofen

“THE BEST OF PLAYWRIGHT Harrison David Rivers’s recent stream of strong work.”
- Lavender Magazine

“For all our great loves, for the moments we held each other and time stood still. For those we lost - your breath sways through the leaves, your memory will always be reflected in the world around as your presence continues to move through us like the bowing of a cello.”
- Sherri Eden Barber

“ELEGANTLY STAGED by Sherri Eden Barber.”
- Star Tribune

Scenic Design by Maruti Evans
This year offered much to celebrate in the area of New Work at Theater Latté Da. The ambitious Next 20/20 initiative, Latté Da’s commitment to support the development of 20 new musicals and plays with music by 2020, met that goal. Our World Premiere production of To Let Go and Fall by Harrison David Rivers became the 20th new work supported by the initiative.

1,185 people attended the seventh annual NEXT Festival this past July, a testament to our audiences’ excitement about and investment in supporting new voices and new work. Included in this year’s Festival was Half the Sky, an adventurous new musical by the all-female creative team of composer Tidtaya Sinutoke, playwright Isabella Dawis, and director Desdemona Chiang; Peter Rothstein’s exploration of Dylan Thomas’ poetic holiday classic, A Child’s Christmas in Wales, with music by Welsh composer Cerys Matthews; and a first look at the new musical adaptation of Twelve Angry Men by Michael Holland and David Simpatico. Twelve Angry Men will have its World Premiere as part of Theater Latté Da’s 22nd Season.

Theater Latté Da’s reputation as a vibrant home for new musicals increasingly garners national attention. The well-received musical Five Points (NEXT Festival, 2016; World Premiere 2018) continues development under the guidance of Hamilton choreographer Andy Blankenbeuhler, and Gun and Powder (NEXT Festival 2018) premieres at Washington DC’s Signature Theater in January.

Continuing our commitment to diversifying the voices represented in musical theater, we have just launched the NEXT Generation Commission program. This new initiative offers women artists and artists of color $20,000 and access to developmental resources at the generative stages of a new piece.

The artists and audiences of Theater Latté Da come together around the shared experience of telling stories and making theatre, musically. We know the power of this art form to lift hearts and open minds. Our support of new work and new voices grows from our desire to see that experience carried forward into the future. We are so grateful for your investment in this vision and in our work.

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Elissa Adams
Associate Artistic Director
Since Theater Latté Da’s inception more than 20 years ago, we have gained national prominence in our field. Perhaps what I’m most proud of, though, is the work we do right here in Minneapolis – bringing thousands of students, artists, educators, and neighbors into our theater to witness something transformative, together.

Theater Latté Da’s 2019 Gala raised more than $200,000 to support our accessibility programs, ensuring that our theater is welcoming to all Minnesotans. In 2018-19, we welcomed nearly 1,100 people to the Ritz through our education and outreach initiatives, including high school students who participated in pre-show masterclasses with Latté Da artists, and low-income seniors who saw performances for free or at a deeply reduced cost.

In addition to making Theater Latté Da accessible for audiences, we’ve also focused considerable efforts on supporting and strengthening the local artist community.

Last year, Latté Da received funding from the McKnight Foundation to support the creation of a 5,700 square-foot scene shop in Northeast Minneapolis. Since opening, our scene shop has flourished, becoming an affordable, accessible space for Latté Da artists and artists from other theater companies. A shared scene shop has been a need for small- and mid-sized Twin Cities theaters for decades, and we’re thrilled to be able to provide this resource.

Small arts organizations without performance space of their own, like Journey Productions, Sheep Theatre, and Black Label Movement, also benefit from affordable rentals of our home in the Ritz Theater for rehearsals and performances year-round.

Thank you for supporting Theater Latté Da and our efforts to make the Twin Cities a place where the arts can continue to thrive.

Sincerely,

Michelle Woster
Managing Director

“I am an actor and singer who has lived in Northeast for almost 10 years. Though our neighborhood clearly benefits economically from the arts, more importantly they teach us how to listen to one another, how to share the same space, and how to thrive together.

The Ritz Theater has been our neighborhood theater for almost 100 years: showing Polish films in its infancy; providing a home for Cricket Theatre in the 70’s; showing Asian films in the 80’s; offering dance with Ballet of the Dolls in the 2000’s, and now home to one of the greatest musical theaters in the region, thrilling and inspiring audiences through productions that resonate with our community as it exists right now. Here, within these walls, we are invited - all are invited - as generations have been before us, to convene and learn, laugh, cry, rage, rock out, sing, and communicate. It is our stage, it is our forum, it is a place where all can have a voice and be heard.”

-Rodolfo Nieto, Actor/Singer
IN SEASON 21 WE HAD

2,412
SEASON TICKET HOLDERS
AN INCREASE OF 53% OVER
THE PREVIOUS SEASON

1,250
DONORS CONTRIBUTED 35% OF
OUR TOTAL BUDGET

“Over my 60+ years, I have seen a few shows on Broadway, many local and touring shows in the Cities, and been to hundreds of music concerts. Without any doubt or qualification, the performance we saw last night of Once was one of the most wonderful, enjoyable, thoughtful shows I have seen. Moving. Laughing. Crying. Thank you.”

- Mark H., Once Patron

“Everything we have seen at Theater Latté Da we have enjoyed immensely, and we always learn something important. Hedwig expanded our 75+ year-old sensibilities; redrew and expanded our boundaries and circles of understanding and compassion; renewed our hope of traversing bad times; and confounded us with its beauty, hilarity, cynicism, music, and stellar acting, enough to both bring us down the depths and shoot us beyond the stars of humanity.”

- Hedwig and the Angry Inch Patron

“We admire your drive to add to musical theater, and your utilization of local talent. We learn something every time we attend a NEXT Festival production. Imagine our profound delight and enjoyment in experiencing the growth of both Underneath the Lintel and To Let Go and Fall. Thank you for opening your doors so we can experience some of the process.”

- NEXT Festival Patron
AUDIENCE STATISTICS

ONCE
10,545 patrons

ALL IS CALM - New York City
7,905 patrons

ALL IS CALM - North American Tour
10,636 patrons

A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC
10,111 patrons

CANDIDE
3,000 patrons

HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH
7,983 patrons

TO LET GO AND FALL
4,965 patrons

NEXT Festival 2019
1,185 patrons

2,943 New Patrons Served
168 Performances of 6 Productions
Including a production of Candide in partnership with Vocalessence at the Cowles Center in downtown Minneapolis.
As chair of the Board of Theater Latté Da, I am proud to report that we ended the 2018-19 fiscal year in a strong financial position.

The continued success of Theater Latté Da’s productions in 2018-19, including *Once*, which exceeded its revenue goals by $100,000 and became our best-selling show of all time, has significantly expanded our base of donors and patrons. Our contributed income grew by 23% from FY 2018 to FY 2019, and total attendance increased from 33,490 to nearly 40,000. Additionally, the touring and Sheen Center productions of Latté Da’s original production *All is Calm* served an additional 18,540 people across North America and brought in $487,587 in tour income.

We maintain our rigorous commitment to hiring local artists, and we are committed to continuously improving wages, benefits, and our working environment.

I am so grateful for our patrons and donors – your generosity and support are vital as Theater Latté Da continues to grow. On behalf of the entire board, thank you.

Nancy Jones
Board Chair
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As of 7/31/2019

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