



imago
THEATRE

2018-2019

ANNUAL REPORT

A NOTE FROM THE BOARD

I am invariably impressed by Imago Theatre's ability to innovate artistically while maintaining the highest artistic and ethical standards. The organization keeps showcasing stories of unstoppable women while focusing on equal presentation, exchange, and accessibility.

Over the past season, Imago Theatre blended theatre with a variety of other art forms. *Les voisines* brought the audience closer to Hassidic women through an audio-walk, *Elsewhere* used masks to denounce the chaos and absurdity of the Venezuelan crisis and the art installation. *Our Pay-What-You-Decide* philosophy, applied to all our productions, made it possible for a record audience to attend *Other People's Children* and reflect on parenthood, identity and migrant workers.

Our talkbacks, held after each performance and featuring guest speakers, helped us connect with a variety of community organizations doing indispensable work. Our bonds with the community were further strengthened through artistic collaborations, deeper exchanges with educational institutions and an edit-a-thon, *shift/ctrl*, which addressed the lack of women and non-binary theatre creators on Wikipedia. Simultaneously, our online audience grew by 45%, as we focused on not only showing artistic excellence but also on raising awareness, engaging and mobilizing participants.

Our mentorship program for young women, *ARTISTA*, celebrated its fifth year of existence, five workshops for the professional development of emerging theatre artists and creators were offered as part of our Atelier series and we welcomed three artists in residence.

New members committed to catalyzing conversations about women's resilience and women's unsilencing joined our Board of Directors. Not only are they helping us diversify our perspectives but they are also inviting their networks to advance our mission.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you to the Imago Theatre team for making a much needed feminist art practice resonate and in particular to Micheline Chevrier for her exceptional leadership.

- Claudia Torregrosa, *President*

A NOTE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

It has been another great season at Imago. It was, in fact, a year of *firsts*. We premiered the work of emerging artists, produced new modes of storytelling and presented for the first time the hottest playwright in Canada, which turned out to be the best-selling production in our history.

In the fall of 2018, we produced *Other People's Children*, by internationally renowned and award-winning playwright Hannah Moscovitch. The production broke all previous attendance and box office revenue records and was loved by both critics and audiences alike. In January 2019, Imago was pleased to present Odd Stumble's production of *Elsewhere*, written and performed by local Venezuelan Canadian artist Joy Ross-Jones. The entire creative and production teams were made up of emerging theatre makers who produced a visually stunning and moving piece, which then played to sold-out houses. We opened the day following the largest protest rally in Venezuelan history and Juan Gerardo Guaidó Márquez's declaration of his constitutional right to claim leadership. In June 2019, we presented the audio-walk entitled *Les voisines*, a creation by local theatre artist Arianna Bardesono, with dramaturgy by Shauna Janssen. This presentation was the culmination of a two-year development process, a new form of storytelling for the company, as audience members roamed the streets of Outremont listening to a woman's search for connection to the Hassidic community. Through our artists residence program, several theatre makers developed their work with our support, and our mentorship program for young women, *Artista*, successfully completed its fifth session. In total, over 35 artists participated in the season, bringing their varied experiences and perspectives, their curiosity and their appetite for exploration.

This season also saw an important revisioning of our structure. The entire Imago team is now made up of a group of associate artists, each one an accomplished theatre maker: playwright, director, actor.

To support all this work, we continue to solidify and grow our financial base. In the fall of 2017, we received confirmation of our request for greater funding at the Canada Council, an important increase allowing us to grow our programming and continue to strengthen our infrastructure. Our dynamic board of directors, led by the tireless and visionary Claudia Torregrosa, is helping grow our network of supporters as we strengthen our partnerships with the private sector and individual donors.

These achievements are possible because of the incredible dedication and talents of the Imago team. These artists, who bring a variety of skills to the day-to-day activities of the company, carry a wide range of experience and interests that enrich all activities of the company. I am also amazed at the great dedication of so many artists who, when collaborating with Imago, work miracles with our limited resources and who believe, like me, in the power of stories to change the world.

- Micheline Chevrier, *Artistic & Executive Director*



OUR MISSION

Imago Theatre is a catalyst for conversation, and advocate for equal representation and a hub for stories about unstoppable women*.

OUR MANDATE

We are arms open, heads flung back, spinning catalysts.
We are kaleidoscopic words that ripple and tear down walls.
We are daring feminists, creators and mentors.
And we won't stop advancing, developing, democratizing, telling her side of the story.

**Imago Theatre promotes an inclusive definition of woman which includes all people who experience the world as women; trans women, cis-women, people who identify as femme, who are feminine-of-centre, and feminine presenting people.*

WHY HER SIDE OF THE STORY

From [The Status of Women in the Canadian Arts and Culture Industries](#) (2018):

“Research shows a pervasive gender-based income gap across all six sectors under review. A gender income gap, in which women’s average incomes are lower than their male peers, is a defining feature of work in the Canadian arts and cultural industries.

Actors’ Equity reports that in 2012, the average annual income for male performers was \$17,323 compared to \$15,849 for women. According to data from the 2011 National Household Survey, women earn 26% less than men in occupations as actors and comedians, or an average income of \$18,546 compared to \$25,130. Women also earn 16% less than men in positions as producers, directors, choreographers, and other related roles, or an average income of \$45,491 compared to \$54,192.1.

“The media arts/screen, theatre, and music sectors demonstrate an observable gendered division of labour that closely mirrors traditional notions of “men’s” and “women’s” work. Women are overrepresented in professional roles that are generally recognised as feminised occupations, such as administration, marketing, and costumes, and men are over-represented in technical occupations.”

...women are under-represented in more technical fields including set design (66% male) and lighting design (69% male).

“2011 NHS data from Hill Strategies’ 2015 study Educating Artists finds that women constitute 59% of all graduates of visual and performing arts programs.”

[PGC Annual Theatre Production Survey, 2018/19:](#)

Produced plays written by men: 56%

Produced plays written by women: 31%

Produced plays written by Trans & Non Binary Folks: Less than 0.5%

Produced plays written by mixed gender partnerships: 13%

Productions by men were down 4%; women up 1%; productions by trans and non-binary folks held steady; and mixed partnerships were up 4% from last year.

Currently, women form 54 percent of PGC’s membership, but their production statistics do not reflect that fact. ([Alt Theatre, Issue 15.3, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Canadian Theatre Here and Now: Part Two, 2018](#))



ADVANCING HER SIDE OF THE STORY

We advance Her Side of the Story through theatre that advocates for equal participation and representation for women and marginalized groups. We advance equality, social justice and Her Side of the Story through post-show talkbacks that encourage meaningful conversation and exchange.

SOCIAL MEDIA EXPOSURE

Imago Theatre posts articles and videos on our social media channels (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram) that outline stories about women in theatre, gender equity and marginalized communities. Our aim is to spread awareness about these key issues in our industry. Through this posting philosophy, we have seen an increase in engagement and audience across all of our social media channels by 45% in the last year.

TALKBACKS

Imago is the first and only company in Montreal to host post-show talkbacks after every single performance and to feature guest community members in these talkbacks. This practice was implemented in 2013 and allows the audience to continue the conversation started by the performance of the play. The talkback helps deepen the audience members' understanding of both the art form and the ideas/topics presented in the piece.

Through the talkbacks for *Other People's Children* in the fall of 2018, we connected with the following community organizations: PINAY (Im)migrant workers association, MotherWit Doula Care, Doctors of the World, McGill's Department of Geography, Planning and Environment, Mahilum-Haydock Education Foundation, Association for the Right of Household Workers and Migrant Workers Rights Canada.

For *Elsewhere* we partnered with The Canadian Venezuelan Engagement Foundation. Through various individuals within the Venezuelan community who have followed Elsewhere development, we were able to connect with many members of this affected community.

Approximately **75%** of our audiences stay for our talkbacks after each performance.

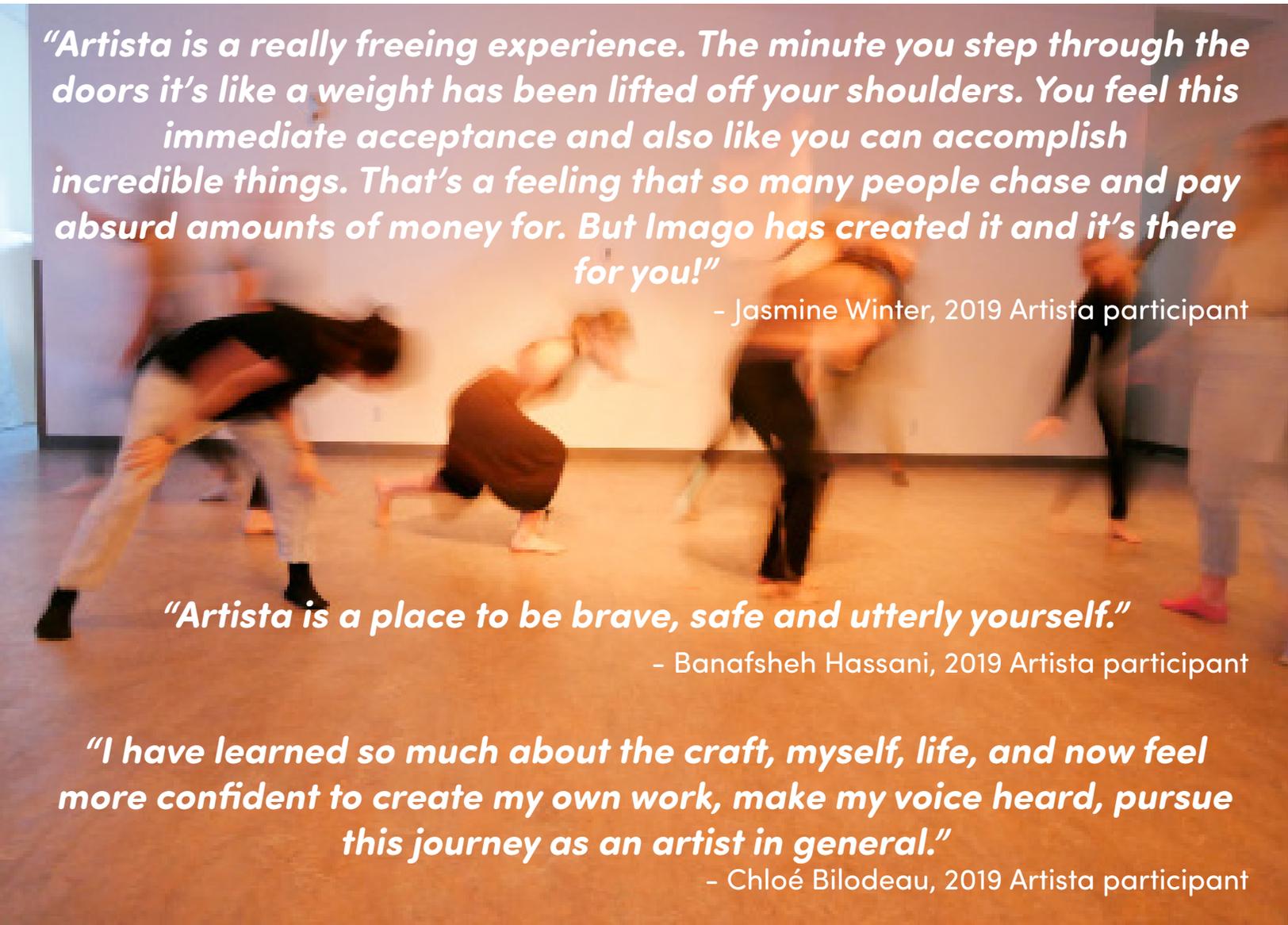
DEVELOPING HER SIDE OF THE STORY

We develop Her Side of the Story through ARTISTA, our free theatre arts mentorship program for young women, and also by providing mentorship opportunities and artistic residencies for emerging and established theatre artists from a variety of disciplines (acting, playwriting, directing, artistic direction and art administration).

ARTISTA empowers a community of young women* 16 to 21 years old to tell their own stories and supports them to take these stories to the stage. Theatrical collaboration, experimentation and mentorship from professional artist mentors build independence and confidence in artistic craftsmanship and offer insight into the diverse facets of Montreal's theatre industry.

The fifth year of ARTISTA took place from January to May, 2019, and involved 12 participants under the mentorship of Program Director Joy Ross-Jones, Associate Program Director Lorena Trigos, and three Montreal Theatre artists - Dayna McLeod, Marie Barlizo and Jane Wheeler.

**Imago Theatre promotes an inclusive definition of woman which includes all people who experience the world as women; trans women, cis-women, people who identify as femme, who are feminine-of-centre, and feminine presenting people.*



“Artista is a really freeing experience. The minute you step through the doors it’s like a weight has been lifted off your shoulders. You feel this immediate acceptance and also like you can accomplish incredible things. That’s a feeling that so many people chase and pay absurd amounts of money for. But Imago has created it and it’s there for you!”

- Jasmine Winter, 2019 Artista participant

“Artista is a place to be brave, safe and utterly yourself.”

- Banafsheh Hassani, 2019 Artista participant

“I have learned so much about the craft, myself, life, and now feel more confident to create my own work, make my voice heard, pursue this journey as an artist in general.”

- Chloé Bilodeau, 2019 Artista participant

RESIDENCIES

Imago offers artist residencies to women or women-identifying playwrights, as well as presenting companies, with an eye to supporting their writing and work through mentorship, dramaturgy and workshops with professional theatre makers.

Imago's 2018-2019 Artists in Residence:

Julie Tamiko Manning with **HOME** - a play about women and homelessness

Caitlin Murphy with **WHEN THE LIGHT: A MEDITATION ON CAREGIVING** - a play examining the issue, value and respect for of care in our society

Jennifer Roberts with **THE SOUND OF DOGS** - a play exploring the Deaf culture

SHIFT/CTRL

shift/ctrl was an event curated by Sophie Gee with Aux Écuries and Festival Jamais Lu on a feminist Wikipedia editathon aimed at increasing online representation for women and non-binary theatre artists. Imago Theatre posted articles and videos on our social media channels (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram) that outline stories about women in theatre, gender equity and marginalized communities. Our aim is to spread awareness about these key issues in our industry. Through this posting philosophy, we have seen an increase in engagement and audience across all of our social media channels by 45% in the last year.

ATELIER

Imago's Atelier series focuses on quality and accessible professional development workshops for emerging and established theatre artists and creators. In May 2019, five workshops and one three-day masterclass were held with 51 participants, most sessions reaching full capacity.

3 DAY MASTER CLASS
with Micheline Chevrier

INTERDISCIPLINARY CREATION
with Jacqueline van de Geer

AUDITIONING
with Eda Holmes

MOVEMENT
with Leslie Baker

ADAPTATION WRITING WORKSHOP
with Paula Wing

VOICE/SINGING
with Shannon Holmes

DEMOCRATIZING HER SIDE OF THE STORY

PAY-WHAT-YOU-DECIDE

In 2015, we implemented a Pay-What-You-Decide ticketing philosophy that aligned with our belief that theatre should be accessible to all. The vision behind the program was to honour and connect to our existing audiences while working to challenge the financial barriers that inhibit audiences from all socio-economic backgrounds from attending.

In the 2018-2019 Season, Imago saw an audience growth of 125%, with an overall box office revenue increase of 75%.

IMAGO'S PARTNERSHIPS WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Ambassadors

Ambassadors are educators and members of community groups who support Imago by encouraging their students/members to attend our productions and festivals. They do this by incorporating the production into their syllabus and activities, and by inviting Imago Theatre into their class-rooms/gatherings to discuss the themes and processes behind the production.

Portfolios

We take great care in creating a portfolio for each production that focuses on how Imago can complement learning at high school, college, and university levels of education. These are sent to teachers and include the historical, economic and political background of the show; information about the creative team and the creation process; and questions that can help further the discussion in the classroom. These portfolios are available at imagotheatre.ca in the past productions archive.

Attendance

230 students attended Imago's production of *Other People's Children* in the fall of 2018, all from various institutions and departments.

MCGILL UNIVERSITY: History of Canada and the World, and the School of Social Work (56 students)

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY: Acting for Theatre, Introduction to Playwriting, Directing (59 students)

VANIER COLLEGE: Literature (75 students)

DAWSON COLLEGE: English (17 Students)

BLACK THEATRE WORKSHOP's Artist Mentorship Program (13 students)

NATIONAL THEATRE SCHOOL: Production (10 students)

VOLUNTEER NETWORK

100 hours volunteered by Board Members &
1 volunteer at **EVERY** performance



OTHER PEOPLE'S CHILDREN

In *Other People's Children*, by award-winning playwright Hannah Moscovitch, three lives entangle around the care of an infant. Ilana and Ben, a wealthy young Canadian couple, hire Sati, a Sri Lankan nanny, whose arrival pulls the thread on their already unravelling relationship.



TEXT BY

Hannah Moscovitch

THE CAST

Brett Donahue
Kathleen Stavert
Asha Vijayasingham

THE CREATIVE TEAM

Leslie Baker, Movement Director
Peter Cerone, Sound Design
Micheline Chevrier, Director
Amanda Goldberg, Assistant Director
Brandon Hepworth, Assistant Stage Manager
Chantal Labonté, Lighting Design
Danielle Laurin, Stage Manager
Diana Uribe, Set and Costume Design

- Nominated for Outstanding Ensemble for the 2019 Montreal English Theatre Awards
- Highest box office revenue in the theatre's history
- 70% attendance

"... the Imago team has created something that looks and feels astonishingly good and real."

— CULT MTL

"Pin-sharp performances, brilliantly-constructed & believable dialogue, soul-shaking themes about parenthood & casual contempt disguised as kindness towards "the other".

Most impressed. Well done."

— Jim Burke (journalist for the Montreal Gazette and Fun House)

"deft direction by Micheline Chevrier"

— Westmount Magazine

Supported by the Cole Foundation

ELSEWHERE

Elsewhere, written by a young Venezuelan-Canadian artist Joy Ross-Jones, is the story of six people's lives – their hope, resilience, resistance and survival- amidst the chaos and absurdity of the Venezuelan crisis.



CREATED AND PERFORMED BY
Joy Ross-Jones

THE CREATIVE TEAM

Cristina Cugliandro, Director
Joel Gorrie, Sound Design
Amber Hood, Lighting Design
René Orea, Sound Design
Zachari Smith, Sound Design
HeatherEllen Strain, Stage Manager
Liv Wright, Set and Costume Design

“A sight to behold ... illustrates the impact of political problems of individuals.”

– Montreal Rampage

“Ross-Jones is magic.”

– Montreal Theatre Hub

An Odd Stumble production in association with Imago Theatre



LES VOISINES

ARIANNA BARDESONO

imago
THEATRE

THE CREATIVE TEAM

Arianna Bardesono, Creator
Shauna Janssen, Dramaturge
Pierre-Luc Brunet, Sound Engineer

Les voisines, created by Arianna Bardesono, is an urban audio-walk through Outremont and the Mile End that explores the distance a woman feels between herself and the Hasidic women living in the city she calls home. Born out of a deep curiosity to understand, *Les voisines* aims at connection by exploring humans' relationship to space, difference, culture and each other.

Supported by the Brian Bronfman Family Foundation

IMAGO TEAM and **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

IMAGO TEAM

Micheline Chevrier - Artistic & Executive Director

Cristina Cugliandro - Associate Artist, Outreach

Erin Lindsay - Associate Artist, Communications

Joy Ross-Jones - Associate Artist, Artista Program Director

Jen Viens - Artistic and Administrative Assistant (2018)

Danna-Rae Evasiuk - Artistic and Administrative Assistant (2019)

Sarah Gonzales - Illustrator and Graphic Designer

Andrew Andreoli - Videographer

Jake Ackman - Tech angel

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Claudia Torregrosa, President

Katherine Frohlich, Vice-President

Élodie Le Grand, Secretary

Dean Fleming, Treasurer

Jessica Chen

Micheline Chevrier

Andrew Katz

Andrée Lalumière

Maude Levasseur

Clare Schapiro

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Corinne Roche

Viviane Dohle

Peter Roberts

OUR SUPPORTERS

Imago Theatre is fortunate to be supported by both public and private funders, as well as many individuals, who give generously to ensure the company's stability and sustainability.

Canada Council for the Arts

Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec

Conseil des arts de Montréal

The J.F. Armand Bombardier Foundation

The Brian Bronfman Family Foundation

The Cole Foundation

George-Vanier Cultural Centre

RBC Foundation

Zeller Family Foundation

Georges Laoun Opticien (Imago Theatre Pay-What-You-Decide Partner)



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des arts
du Canada

Zeller
FAMILY FOUNDATION



**FONDATION
J. ARMAND
BOMBARDIER**



Conseil
des arts
et des lettres
du Québec



**RBC
Foundation™**



CONSEIL
DES ARTS
DE MONTRÉAL

Montréal 



And many individual donors who make what we do possible.

Imago Theatre Financial Statements

Year end June 30, 2019 (Unaudited)

REVENUES

Public Funding:

Canada Council for the Arts (CCA)	80,500
Conseil Arts & Lettres du Québec (CALQ)	40,000
Mécénat Placement Culture (CALQ)	15,628
Conseil des Arts de Montréal (CAM)	30,000
Emploi Québec	22,951
Group of 5+ (CCA)	2,037

Donations:

Foundations/Sponsors:

<i>RBC Foundation</i>	5,000
<i>Brian Bronfman Family Foundation</i>	3,600
<i>Cole Foundation</i>	59,430
<i>Fondation J. Armand Bombardier</i>	8,000
Individual donations	15,216
Benefit events	7,230
Georges Laoun Opticien	500
In-kind Sponsorship	2,372

Earned Revenues:

Box Office Revenues	26,060
Other Revenues	7,135

TOTAL REVENUES	325,659
-----------------------	----------------

EXPENSES

Production:

Artistic contracts and salaries, production contracts	148,325
Artistic and production expenses	88,828
Promotion	23,825

Group of 5+ project expenses	1,488
------------------------------	-------

Administration:

Salaries and benefits	19,897
Rent, utilities, insurance and office expenses	24,769
Professional fees, memberships and bank charges	8,934

TOTAL EXPENSES	316,066
-----------------------	----------------