

2020 - 2021



ANNUAL REPORT

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD

Artistic excellence, innovation, relevance and generosity are the words that best describe Imago Theatre's work, especially over the past season. The company never stopped delivering the theatre we respect and admire, in a transition year when artists needed this presence the most.

There was continuity in Imago's mentorship of theatre makers, whether through ARTISTA or through the Creators Circle. But this season was also about reinvention and increasing accessibility and visibility by experimenting with new art forms: a digital festival, audio plays and feminist urban theatre practices with the Feminist Performance Creation and the City workshops. I continue being amazed by Imago's generosity, giving all the proceeds to the artists for *Eco-anxiety*, and donating all proceeds from *Tuning In* to Open Door, a drop-in centre providing services to homeless and low-income people in downtown Montreal.

After five years on Imago Theatre's Board, I could not be prouder of and have more trust in our existing and upcoming Board members, Imago's core team, artists, and our relentless Artistic & Executive Director, Micheline. Thank you, Imago, for being a persistent source of inspiration, dialogue and change.

Claudia Torregrosa





NOTE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Unprecedented times.
Challenging times.
Extraordinary times.

I have used these words in almost all my emails when contacting the various artists working with Imago over the past 18 months. We have shared our ups and down, our fears, our discoveries, our hopes and our desires. We have come together on the phone, over Zoom, and in person: in parks, on balconies, and ultimately in rehearsal halls and theatres wearing our masks and keeping our distance. I could add 'reimagining' to the list of words frequently used in conversation this past season. As well as 'steep learning curve,' as we all tackled the world of film and audio. Our exploration of these story-telling platforms was indeed challenging, but it was mostly exhilarating and inspiring, showing us that we could indeed imagine alternative ways to make theatre.

Using digital platforms also taught us that, as a company dedicated to accessibility, we needed to broaden our understanding of how to open our doors even wider. Our *Eco-Anxiety* series, along with our audio production of *Tuning In*, reached people across Canada and beyond. One of the pieces from *Eco-anxiety*, *Canary*, was presented in Australia, while *A Letter from the Ocean*, from the same series, was shown at the Comox Valley Art Gallery in Courtenay, BC. Most importantly, it taught us that everyone, regardless of disability or other barriers, could experience these extraordinary works, enjoy their artistry, and be moved by their content.

We needed to reimagine/reexamine how we make what we make for many reasons: artists needed to work, many stories in urgent need to be told, and all of us needed to connect with each other during this time of forced isolation. Whether performing, mentoring, creating or developing, artists from here and all over Canada and the world came together to make theatre.

NEED. There has always been so much of it, but it became very obvious (unavoidably so) during the pandemic that there are gaping holes in our society deeply affecting much of our population. Imago gave all revenues generated from our *Eco-anxiety* series to the artists involved. *Tuning In's* box office revenues were donated to The Open Door in Montreal.

Personally, the pandemic has asked me to reflect on our relationship to our past (both personal and collective), the consequences of my actions and how it will inform my next steps. Whether it's facing the age-old reckless disregard we have for our planet or owning our shameful history of genocide of our country's Indigenous people, these truths will forever shape why and how I make theatre from this day forward.

Unprecedented. Challenging. Extraordinary.
I hope these words are forever part of my everyday conversation so they may shock me awake and inspire the art I make.

Micheline Chevrier

**IMAGO THEATRE IS A
PROFESSIONAL FEMINIST
THEATRE COMPANY BASED
IN TIOHTIÀ:KE/MONTREAL,
CANADA. THE COMPANY
HAS BEEN PRODUCING
PLAYS SINCE 1987 AND IS
A CATALYST FOR
CONVERSATION, AN
ADVOCATE FOR EQUAL
REPRESENTATION, AND A
HUB FOR STORIES ABOUT
UNSTOPPABLE WOMEN.**



MANDATE

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

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.

We **democratize** access to Her Side of the Story through our Pay-What-You-Decide initiative and by ensuring that all our events take place in spaces that are physically accessible to all.

We **tell** Her Side of The Story through theatre about unstoppable women with urgent stories that challenge and galvanize audiences.

BEING A FEMINIST THEATRE COMPANY IN 2020-2021

2020: The Year One in Four Arts Worker Lost Their Job

Canadian Association for the Performing Arts

- Relative to its size, the arts, entertainment and recreation sector lost more jobs than any other sector in 2020. Employment fell from 450,500 in 2019 to 336,100 jobs in 2020. That's a 25.4% drop. The only other sector that experienced a loss of this magnitude is accommodation and food services, at -22.6%.
- Of all Canadian jobs lost in 2020, 11% were arts, entertainment and recreation jobs.
- Total actual hours worked declined 36.6% in the arts, entertainment and recreation sector in 2020. Along with accommodation and food services (-32.8%), the arts, entertainment and recreation sector was by far the hardest hit in 2020.
- Within the arts sector, performing arts companies experienced the largest drop in total actual hours worked in 2020: -60.7%.

Domestic Violence Calls In Canada Almost Doubled During COVID-19 Pandemic

Huffpost

- One in 10 women is very or extremely concerned about the possibility of violence in the home.

Policy Brief: The Impact of Covid-19 on Women

United Nations

- Across the globe, women earn less, save less, hold less secure jobs, and are more likely to be employed [...] They have less access to social protections and are the majority of single-parent households. Their capacity to absorb economic shocks is therefore less than that of men.
- As women take on greater care demands at home, their jobs will also be disproportionately affected by cuts and lay-offs. In many countries, the first round of layoffs has been particularly acute in the services sector, including retail, hospitality and tourism, where women are overrepresented.

Cast

Arlen Aguayo Stewart, Vlad Alexis, Eloi ArchamBaudoin, Jimmy Blais, Clea Minaker, Warona Setshwaelo, Julie Trépanier

Creative Team

Andrew Andreoli (Director of Photography), Cristina Cugliandro (Director), Danna-Rae Evasiuk (Lighting Designer), Clea Minaker (Art Director, *A Letter From the Ocean*), Amelia Scott (Projection Designer, *Canary*), Evan Stepanian (Sound Designer), Diana Uribe (Environment Consultant)

WATCH THE TRAILER

All box office revenue was shared among the artists.

ECO-ANXIETY

November 2020/February 2021

Eco-anxiety was a digital festival of four short plays written by award-winning international playwrights and showcases the work of 13 Montreal artists. At times funny, at times moving, all four plays use different storytelling techniques as they explore the realities of the global climate crisis.

"*Eco-Anxiety* did something that is very difficult to do: give voice to the entities with whom we share this planet but who we rarely, if ever, truly face."

- Cynthia Hammond

"A cool creative milestone... Love what Imago Theatre did with my play!"

- Sunny Drake, *Absolutely Nothing of Any Meaning* playwright



TUNING IN

April 2021

In partnership with the MAI, *Tuning In* was a commissioned series of three new, short audio plays penned by women playwrights from across Canada. *Tuning In* tackled issues of denial, fear and care. Playwrights explored the perspectives that reflect our personal realities and also the truths that bind us together and invite us to question the human experience and how society shapes us.

WATCH THE PROCESS

All funds raised were donated to Open Door Montreal, a drop-in centre providing services to homeless and low-income people in downtown Montreal

Playwrights

Audrey Dwyer (*The Ringtone*)

Amy Lee Lavoie (*Scout's Honour*)

Yvette Nolan (*Lâche pas la patate*)

Cast

Jimmy Blais, Danny Brochu, Lucinda Davis, Brian Dooley, Anne-Marie Saheb, Warona Setshwaelo, Julie Tamiko Manning, Heather White, with foley by Evan Stepanian

Creative Team

Andrew Andreoli (Director of Photography), Joseph Browne (Sound Engineer), Micheline Chevrier (Direction, *Scout's Honour*), Sylvia Cloutier (Direction, *Lâche pas la patate*), Lydie Dubuisson (Direction, *The Ringtone*), Fatma Sarah Elkashef (Direction, *Lâche pas la patate*), Danna-Rae Evasiuk (Technical Director), Kathleen Flaherty (Dramaturgy), Evan Stepanian (Sound), Emma Tibaldo (Direction, *The Ringtone*), Alessandra Tom (Direction, *Scout's Honour*)
Broadcast made possible by PotatoCakes_Digital





GOING DIGITAL

This past year at Imago has given us opportunity to experiment with different ways of sharing stories. From digital theatre, to audio plays, and podcast outcomes, each project has reimaged the way Imago tells stories.

Persephone Bound: Continuing the Conversation is a digital interpretation of the live theatre performance *Persephone Bound*, which will be broadcast to high schools and universities, as well as theatre, circus and film festivals around the world starting in the fall of 2021 in partnership with Imago Theatre and Screaming Goats Collective.

Persephone Bound was originally produced in the Fall of 2019, in partnership with Geordie Theatre and Screaming Goats Collective at the DB Clarke Theatre. The piece is an intensely visceral play that uses aerial circus, text and music to explore the meaning of sexual consent through a retelling of the Greek myth of Persephone.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Imago Theatre continues to find new feminist approaches to sharing information, stimulating conversation and advancing her side of the story.

This season we've engaged:

- 725 students with our productions *Eco-Anxiety* and *Tuning In*
- Over 1000 audience members throughout our season
- Over 60 artists in our programming
- 10 guest blog writers including Fiona Beaty, Nahka Bertrand-Dene, Chantal Bilodeau, Jimmy Blais, Cynthia Hammond, Élodie Le Grand, Julie Tamiko Manning, Yvette Nolan, Warona Setshwaelo, and Eddy van Wyk
- 3 different companies in partnerships
- Facebook and Instagram accounts over 4000 times

We have also seen a 17% audience growth across all social media channels and witnessed a 19% increase of unique visitors to our website.

FEMINIST PERFORMANCE CREATION AND THE CITY

June 2021

A collaboration between Imago Theatre and PULSE

The aims of the FPCC workshops were to create a template that will be used by Imago Theatre as part of its programming to engage, mobilize, and explore performance methods for creating feminist urban theatre practices.

Feminist approaches to site-specific urban performance creation recount stories that do not fit neatly into theatre and performance practices, discourses and paradigms. We focus on marginalized women's stories and urban performances of diversity, citizenship, identity, making home, and care in Montreal using unique research creation methods.



Washing Women

by Zoe Roux

Against the Grain

by Micheline Chevrier and Cristina Cugliandro

Les Fantômes

by Maude LaFrance

Shauna Janssen

Principal Investigator and Dramaturg





Team

Kathleen Stavert - Program Director
 Joy Ross-Jones - Consultant
 Kalale Dalton-Lutale - Mentor
 Natalie Tannous - Mentor

Guest Artists

Carmen Aguirre
 Katie Gorrie
 Falen Johnson
 Erin Lindsay
 Yvette Nolan
 Diane Roberts
 Anana Rydvald
 Djanet Sears
 Felicia Shulman
 Mireille Tawfik
 Paula Wing

ARTISTA is Imago's free mentorship program that empowers a community of young women* to tell their own stories, and supports them to take these stories to the stage. Theatrical collaboration, experimentation and mentorship from professional artists build independence and confidence in artistic craftsmanship and offer insight into the diverse facets of Montreal's theatre industry.

In 2021, ARTISTA had 8 participants and the experience culminated in a **podcast** featuring their writing and music, created over the course of the program.

*Imago Theatre promotes an inclusive definition of women which includes all people who experience the world as women; trans women, cis-women, as well as non-binary people who are comfortable in a space that centres the experiences of women

ARTISTA

CREATORS CIRCLE

The Creators Circle is a hub for theatre artists to workshop their developing projects in an environment of support and solidarity. The plays and artists selected centralize questions of gender and femininity, while engaging in radical and daring creation practices.

The 2020-2021 Cohort

(as pictured left to right)

Gabe Maharjan, *Kamala*

Jennifer Roberts, *Sound of Dogs*

Joy Ross-Jones, *Fix*

Erin Lindsay, *Lysistrata*

Katey Wattam, *river woman*

Marie Barlizo, *Warrior*

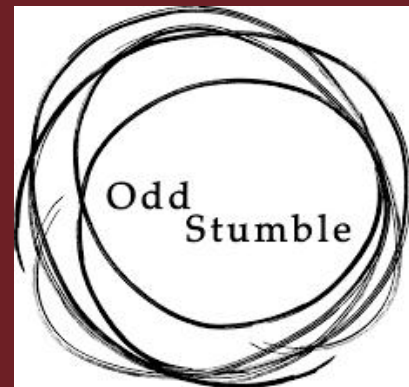
Company in Residence: Oddstumble

"I learned that the stories of my ancestors live inside of me and I need to trust that I'll tell them."

- Marie Barlizo

"I learned that time is non-linear, that silence is speak, and everything will come when it must."

- Katey Wattam



Pay What You Decide Policy

In 2015, Imago implemented our Pay-What-You-Decide ticketing philosophy. It aligns with our belief that theatre should be accessible to all. The vision behind the policy was to honour and connect to our existing audiences while working to challenge the financial barriers that inhibit audiences from all socioeconomic backgrounds from attending.

Changing the Culture

In November 2020, Imago presented a panel hosted by Micheline Chevrier, with alumni Kayleigh Choiniere, Gabriela Saltiel, Grace Gordon, Mara Lazaris, Shannon Tasic-Mcnally, and Amber Goldfarb, who came forward about their destructive experiences at Dawson College and are looking to see lasting change in the culture of theatre schools.

Imago on the Move

Imago on the Move is an outreach initiative that aims to strengthen relations with educators and their students through in-class visits by the Imago Team and its Artistic Director Micheline Chevrier, along with working artists in the community. We take care in creating a portfolio for each production that focuses on how Imago can complement learning at high school, CGEP, 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.



Photo by: Andrew Andreoli

Staff

Micheline Chevrier - Artistic & Executive Director

Cristina Cugliandro - Associate Artist, Outreach

Danna-Rae Evasiuk- Associate Artist, Communications

Shauna Janssen - Associate Artist

Joy Ross-Jones - ARTISTA Consultant

Kathleen Stavert - ARTISTA Program Director

Katey Wattam - Artistic & Administrative Assistant (2020)

Alessandra Tom - Artistic & Administrative Assistant (2021)

Andrew Andreoli - Videographer

Jake Ackman - Tech angel

Meags Fitzgerald - Illustrator and Graphic Designer

Jonathan Stern - Artistic Intern

Board

Claudia Torregrosa, President

Katherine Frohlich, Vice-President

Valerie Lafond, Secretary

Montserrat Cortez Ghio, Treasurer

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Andrée Lalumière, Member

Élodie Le Grand, Member

Clare Schapiro, Member

Marin Savignac, Member

Viviane Dohle, Advisory Committee

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Peter Roberts, Advisory Committee



OUR SUPPORTERS



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Canada



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BMO



Conseil
des arts
et des lettres
du Québec



CANADIAN
WOMEN'S
FOUNDATION

FONDATION
CANADIENNE
DES FEMMES



CAMP OUAREAU

**EQUALITY
FUND**

And the many individual donors who make
what we do possible.

Imago Theatre Financial Statements

Year End June 30, 2021 (Unaudited)

REVENUES

Public Funding

| | |
|---|--------|
| Canada Council for the Arts(CCA) | 95,000 |
| CCA Emergency Fund | 26,500 |
| Conseil des Arts de Montreal (CAM) | 30,000 |
| Conseil Arts & Lettres du Quebec (CALQ) | 40,000 |
| CALQ Emergency Fund | 6,077 |
| Mécénat Placement Culture (CALQ) | 15,628 |
| Emploi Québec (Subvention Salariale) | 16,442 |
| Emploi Québec (PAAS) | 1,800 |
| Canada Emergency Wage/Rent Subsidy | 51,083 |

Sponsorships and Donations:

| | |
|---|--------|
| Artsvest | 4,141 |
| RBC Foundation | 5,000 |
| Canadian Women's Foundation | 5,000 |
| Fondation du Grand Montréal (Gender Equity) | 2,000 |
| Individual donations | 21,321 |

Earned Revenues:

| | |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Box Office Sales | 2,396 |
| Co-Pro revenues (MAI) | 6,000 |
| Other Revenues | 4,247 |

TOTAL REVENUES

332,635

EXPENSES

Production:

| | |
|---|---------|
| Artistic salaries and contracts, production contracts | 167,957 |
| Artistic and production expenses | 45,528 |
| Promotion | 24,621 |

Administration:

| | |
|--|--------|
| Salaries and benefits | 18,091 |
| Rent, utilities, insurance and office expenses | 25,545 |
| Professional fees, membership and bank charges | 8,825 |

TOTAL EXPENSES

290,567