

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## Shaw Festival announces 2019 financial results

**Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON (March 6, 2020)** — During the Annual General Meeting held earlier today, the [Shaw Festival](#) announced positive financial results for the 2019 season. **Kevin Patterson**, Treasurer of the Board of Directors, shared with an audience of patrons, donors and company members that both sales and fundraising revenues achieved all-time highs, resulting in a \$519,000 season surplus.

“While the producer in me might be best pleased by our 13 per cent increase in gross operating revenues over 2018, bringing us to a new all-time high of \$34.15 million, the real win for me is what that means in terms of attendance and investment by the public in our charitable programs, the resulting sustainable, expanded employment for our artists, technicians and seasonal staff, and in the accompanying positive economic impact on the town and region generally,” said **Tim Jennings**, Executive Director/CEO.

Audiences are responding to Artistic Director Tim Carroll’s (TC) call for a more human, more connected style of theatre. The 2019 season saw the Festival’s audience increase to 267,413, achieving the Festival’s best results since the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary season almost a decade ago. The Shaw’s holiday season, which expanded to include a mainstage musical, brought more than 36,000 people to Niagara-on-the-Lake in what used to be the off-season. In an effort to make theatre more accessible, the Festival continued its practice of ensuring a large number of its lowest price (\$25-\$40) tickets are available to the public for every performance. With first time buyers making up 25% of the season sales, The Shaw continues to attract new patrons to Niagara-on-the-Lake. The Shaw Festival delivers on its promise of a more connected theatre with 56,000+ patrons and arts workers jointly attending more than 1,900 education events supporting the 789 performances in 2019.

“Last season felt like a breakthrough for us. And by ‘us’ I mean all of us – you the audience and we the theatre makers. Everyone raised their game: we put on a set of shows that we can be very proud of; and you brought to those shows an open and curious spirit. We asked you to engage with our work with your heads and your hearts, and that’s what you did: the conversations we had with each other, about shows that moved you as well as about shows that left you baffled or angry, were all passionate and enlightening,” said **Tim Carroll**, Artistic Director. “The Shaw audience is extraordinary, and I’m getting to know you better and better, while you are getting to know me and my taste. No one play here will please everyone, still less a whole season: but I am proud not only of the spirit in which our work is made, but of the spirit in which you engage with it.”

In addition to the artistic success of 2019, the Shaw Festival has made strides toward achieving the organization’s strategic goals.

“2019 continued our significant progress toward realizing our many strategic objectives, while increasing connectivity to audiences and communities and increasing the number of tickets sold,” said **Peter Jewett**, Chair of the Board of Directors. “On the business side we managed to invest significantly in capital work and future artistic opportunities. Tim Jennings and his team are working towards a solid working capital reserve that will make the Shaw Festival less dependent on bank financing for our annual cash flow management.”

Planning for the future of the organization, the Shaw Festival carried out archaeological and geotechnical survey work at the Royal George Theatre. This work indicates it would be feasible to rebuild the Royal George Theatre on its current site.

“In our planning for the new Royal George Theatre we are determined to keep the style and intimacy of the current theatre, while upgrading its functionality to 21<sup>st</sup> century standards,” said **Mr. Jewett**. “The Board also examined The Shaw’s overall capital asset needs, including artist housing and support spaces for our theatres and education programs. In all our capital planning we are seeking better ways to engage with our audiences outside of performances, and to recognize that we are using our assets year-round with the addition of our holiday season. We are driving towards a capital plan that will promote TC’s vision of The Shaw as the most connected, most engaged, and most human theatre experience available.”

In anticipation of the future needs of the organization, the Shaw Festival announced a newly inaugurated Board of Governors. This new board, appointed by the Board of Directors and chaired by **Tim Price**, launches with 25 of The Shaw’s most connected and stalwart long-time supporters who will act as advisors, ambassadors and stewards for the development of resources, building community relationships and assisting with fundraising activities.

On stage April 2 through December 23, the Shaw Festival’s 2020 season playbill features [\*Gypsy\*](#), [\*The Devil’s Disciple\*](#), [\*Sherlock Holmes and the Raven’s Curse\*](#), [\*Mahabharata\*](#), [\*Charley’s Aunt\*](#), [\*Prince Caspian\*](#), [\*Flush\*](#), [\*Assassins\*](#), [\*The Playboy of the Western World\*](#), [\*Desire Under the Elms\*](#), [\*Trouble in Mind\*](#), [\*A Short History of Niagara\*](#), [\*A Christmas Carol\*](#), [\*Me and My Girl\*](#) and [\*Shaw Not Shaw\*](#). Tickets for the 2020 Festival season are available through the Box Office at 1-800-511-SHAW and online at [shawfest.com](http://shawfest.com).

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### **About the Shaw Festival**

Inspired by the spirit of Bernard Shaw, the Shaw Festival creates unforgettable theatrical encounters. The Shaw Festival is a place where people who are curious about the world gather to share the unique experience of live theatre and to create a deeper human connection with the artists, the beauty and abundance of Niagara and with each other. For more information, please visit [shawfest.com](http://shawfest.com).

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