



SHAW FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES 2024 SEASON RESULTS: A CONTINUED INVESTMENT TO RECOVERY

Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON (March 7, 2025) — An audience made up of [Shaw Festival](#) board and company members, patrons and donors gathered today in the Jackie Maxwell Studio Theatre for the Shaw Festival's Annual Meeting.

Treasurer **Greg Prince** announced the Festival's 2024 season reached operating revenues of \$39 million – The Shaw's largest operating revenue to date – achieving an operating surplus of \$768,000.

"The 2024 season saw a significant turnaround with earned revenues from ticket sales increasing by over 40% from the previous season and annual donations from individuals reaching an all-time high of \$11.93 million," remarked Mr. Prince. "Though we continued to face challenges at our Royal George Theatre, resulting in us suffering lost performances due to persistent infrastructure issues there, we were nonetheless able to remain under budget on 2024 expenses, overall."

Although an operating surplus was achieved, Mr. Prince noted that an accounting deficit of \$492,000 occurred during the fiscal year, because of the impact of amortization charges relative to capital assets. However, he advised those present that significant changes will materialize "in the years ahead as we rebuild the Royal George Theatre and as our new Shaw Artists' Village project comes online."

In 2024, attendance at the Festival rose to approximately 240,000 from 210,000 in 2023, which Mr. Prince cited, as being strong evidence of people's need to create emotional connection with each other through the arts and "the return of patrons demonstrates the importance of the Shaw Festival to the Niagara region and to all businesses operating within the sphere of the Festival's influence."

Mr. Prince concluded his report by stating that during the 2024 season, The Shaw experienced "an excellent result all round", with "earned revenues growing to \$22.5 million – another all-time high – and combined with individual donations, various government grants of \$2.16 million and foundation investments of \$2.39 million, contributed revenues increased to \$16.48 million."

Board Chair **Ian Joseph** commented that "excellent stewardship of donor and other resources resulted in outstanding artistic achievements and advanced The Shaw's strategic priorities."

He added "the first-rate management by the Festival's Endowment Foundation Board through 2024 guided the assets of the Foundation to a level commensurate with The Shaw's annual operating budget. This is a significant step toward ensuring our long-term stability."

Last season, the Festival presented 817 of 823 scheduled performances and 14 separate productions, including its longest-ever production run of Lerner and Loewe's *My Fair Lady* and a short tour of *Snow in Midsummer* to the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. Beyond the stage, 5,015 additional events, classes, workshops and activities engaged over 97,000 additional participants – the largest numbers for add-on experiences and attendance in The Shaw's history, and a combined total attendance of just under 337,000 people.

Recognizing the view of The Shaw's future has evolved under the leadership of Artistic Director **Tim Carroll (TC)** and Executive Director **Tim Jennings**, along with Associate Artistic Director **Kimberley Rampersad**, Mr. Joseph stated: "It is a vision – wholly supported by our Boards – of a theatre focused on real human connection, one that values and encourages more interaction and understanding between our audiences, artists and communities. It is a vision that seeks to address societal needs that art and gatherings in-person can best serve. We have begun the work of examining what physical assets will need to be acquired, modified or rebuilt to meet our objectives."

"TC, Kimberley, Pragna and their creative teams – and indeed all our artists, crews, artisans and staff – should be very proud of the outstanding work that went onto all our stages this past season," acknowledged Mr. Joseph. "Thank you to the members of our Board of Governors, Shaw Festival (U.S.A.) Board and Endowment Foundation Board."

Executive Director Tim Jennings echoed Mr. Joseph's sentiments and credited staff, and Shaw Guild partners for "a remarkable job in correcting the issues of 2023, and in bringing this positive result to bear." He also mentioned The Shaw was "significantly ahead of budget in terms of revenues, even with the six lost performances, and the team managed to stay below budgeted expenses overall. I am very proud of all that work and to get back to numbers that feel much closer to our pre-pandemic levels."

Mr. Jennings also thanked The Shaw's management team, staff, artists, Guild members and all four Boards for their work and continued faith and support in the Festival's work and vision.

"There is no such thing as a normal year at The Shaw. Every year brings new challenges and writes its own narrative," said Artistic Director Tim Carroll. "The nature of what we do – the constant need to find something that will be both familiar enough to appeal and new enough to surprise – means that, even when we think we have found "The Formula," we can't assume it can be repeated.

"Last season's "Formula" was based around Lerner and Loewe's ***My Fair Lady***, "the musical that ran to Christmas," with its Shavian origin, incredible songs and set and costume designs to die for, was the best imaginable piece with which to run the experiment. And it worked: it sold like hot cakes throughout the summer, and managed to hold its own all the way to Christmas. Our other really big hit was Agatha Christie's ***Witness for The Prosecution***, which showed that, if we ever find "The Formula," it will certainly include mystery: our audiences love to try to work out a puzzle and to be delighted when they get it wrong. They also love to laugh, although no one has ever discovered how to make a foolproof comedy, ***One Man, Two Guvnors*** seems about as close as you can get – especially when done so brilliantly. ***The Secret Garden*** demonstrated the vital role of fitting the play to the theatre. Originally slated for the Festival, it sat beautifully in the George.

"In contrast, this season's ***The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*** will need the bigger canvas of the Festival Theatre, where it can hold its own with a powerhouse musical like ***Anything Goes*** or a thriller like ***Wait Until Dark***. This year, we will also experiment with earlier start times for our performances; instead of the Lunchtime One-Act we will have a play, ***Dear Liar***, playing at various times in the Spiegeltent; and we will be plotting how to cope without the Royal George after this season concludes, but enjoying its swan song this year with Shaw's brilliant play, ***Major Barbara***, as well as the riotous farce ***Tons of Money*** and the improvisational whodunit, ***Murder-on-the-Lake***."

Following the run of The Shaw's perennially sold-out holiday production of ***A Christmas Carol***, the current incarnation of the Royal George Theatre will close its doors on December 21, 2025. The rebuild of the new theatre will be in keeping with the style so synonymous to the Niagara-on-the-Lake Heritage District and the beloved jewel box style auditorium it is famous for.

In late 2024, the Shaw Festival acquired the site of the decommissioned Upper Canada Lodge long-term-care home from the Niagara Region and is currently in the process of transforming it into a new Artists' Village. This new campus will include seasonal artist housing, educational facilities for both artists and the public, a new wardrobe construction complex and other assets that will assist the Festival fulfill its ambition of creating a more deeply connected world through theatre.

"We have glimpsed an incredibly exciting future," declared Mr. Carroll. "Now let's make it happen."

The Shaw Festival's 2024 season was generously supported by the **Ontario Arts Council** and the **Canada Council for the Arts**.

The Shaw Festival's 2024 Annual Report and financial statements are available for download at shawfest.com/annual-report/.

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The Shaw Festival wishes to acknowledge and honour the land upon which its patrons and company members gather as the historic and traditional territory of First Nations peoples. Recognition and thanks are extended to the Neutral Nation, the Mississauga and the Haudenosaunee for their stewardship of these lands over millennia.

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. shawfest.com

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