

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SHAW FESTIVAL EXPANDS AUDIO ACCESSIBILITY FOR PATRONS THROUGH PARTNERSHIP WITH WAVEFRONT CENTRE FOR COMMUNICATIONS ACCESSIBILITY

- New partnership introduces next-generation assistive listening technology, creating a more accessible theatre experience for people with hearing loss –

Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON / Vancouver, BC – October 22, 2026 — Whether it's a quiet exchange between characters, a powerful musical score or a standing ovation, every moment in live theatre matters. The Shaw Festival is helping more patrons experience those moments by expanding audio accessibility for people who are Hard of Hearing and those experiencing hearing loss.

Through a partnership with Wavefront Centre for Communication Accessibility, the Shaw Festival is introducing a new hybrid assistive listening system that combines Wi-Fi + Bluetooth and Auracast™ technologies, giving patrons more ways to connect to performances using the hearing technology they already own. By offering both solutions, the Shaw Festival can support a broader range of compatible hearing aids, cochlear implants, earbuds and headphones. Together, these complementary technologies provide greater accessibility today while preparing for the future of assistive listening.

Supported through Wavefront Centre and made possible thanks to The Slight Family Foundation's 2024 gift establishing the National Disability Initiative, the project reflects the Shaw Festival's ongoing commitment to creating welcoming, inclusive and accessible theatre experiences.

"At the Shaw Festival, we believe theatre is a basic human need and everyone should have the opportunity to experience its power to inspire, connect and delight," said Tim Jennings, Executive Director/CEO for the Shaw Festival. "Our partnership with Wavefront Centre for Communication Accessibility will enable more people to experience our productions, strengthening our commitment to creating inclusive theatre experiences where everyone feels welcome and can share in the magic of live performance."

Beginning with its spectacular holiday production of Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella opening on November 20, The Shaw will start piloting Wavefront Centre's technology to complement its existing accessibility offerings by giving patrons another flexible way to experience performances with clearer, more personalized sound.

"The future of accessible listening isn't one technology, it's giving people options," said JoAnn Bentley, Director, Accessibility Services at Wavefront Centre for Communication Accessibility. "By combining Wi-Fi + Bluetooth with emerging Auracast™ technology, the Shaw Festival is creating an inclusive listening experience that works with the hearing devices people use today while preparing for the next generation of hearing technology. This hybrid approach allows more patrons to experience live theatre using their own hearing aids, cochlear implants, earbuds or headphones."

The Shaw Festival joins a growing network of Canadian performing arts venues partnering with Wavefront Centre to advance communication accessibility, demonstrating how accessibility and artistic excellence can go hand in hand while creating a model for theatres across the country.

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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

One of the largest charitable theatre companies in North America, the Shaw Festival's mission is to enrich and connect people's lives through theatre. Based in beautiful Niagara-on-the-Lake, the Shaw Festival's Holiday Season includes [**A Year with Frog and Toad**](#) and [**Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella**](#). The Shaw Festival's 2027 season playbill features **Rodgers & Hammerstein's South Pacific, Arsenic and Old Lace, The Color Purple, Jumpers, Deathtrap, Arms and the Man, Grimm Tales, Goblin:Pygmalion, What Every Woman Knows, Intimate Apparel** and **Agatha Christie's The Rats and The Patient**.

Through its [**All.Together.Now.**](#) Campaign, The Shaw is creating new spaces and programs where people can build real human connections and rediscover their creativity. For more information, visit shawfest.com.

We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing. ~ George Bernard Shaw

About Wavefront Centre for Communication Accessibility

Wavefront Centre for Communication Accessibility is a Canadian leader in advancing communication accessibility for people who are Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing. Through accessibility services, assistive technology, interpreting, and innovative partnerships, Wavefront Centre creates opportunities for greater connection, inclusion, and participation in everyday life. For more information, visit wavefrontcentre.ca.

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