

Soulpepper | 2020 Annual Report



The artists and staff of Soulpepper and the Young Centre for the Performing Arts acknowledge the original caretakers and storytellers of this land – the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and Wendat First Nation, and The Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation who are part of the Anishinaabe Nation. We commit to honouring and celebrating their past, present and future.

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A Message from the Artistic + Executive Directors

It is difficult to write an introduction to an annual report that reflects on 2020. This was not the year we had planned. Nor the one we had hoped for, or dreamed of.

We sprang into January with confidence and energy. Our first season, lovingly curated during our first year at Soulpepper, was about to begin, and our Strategic Plan, committing the company to a bold new policy of Radical Inclusion, had been enthusiastically endorsed by our board the preceding November.

It couldn't have started better. *Mother's Daughter* and *Jesus Hopped the A Train* filled our theatres with an audience who were not only inspired to see great art, but keen to dig deeper, joining our new series of *Community Conversations* with passion and involvement. Our *Toronto Climate Gathering* was a landmark event, convening our theatre making community for a day of discussion on how we can positively impact the climate crisis, distinguishing Soulpepper as a leading voice on the issue. And, after months of effort, we finally delivered the funding needed to bring back the *Soulpepper Academy*.

Then, the world changed. Our doors closed. Everything stopped.



The season was cancelled, and our hearts broke as artist after artist lost work on projects that we were unable to deliver. Our education programs were suspended, our staff pivoted to working from home, and our sector entered a phase of profound, existential uncertainty.

But, somewhere amidst the fire-fighting, something beautiful began to emerge. A powerful network of industry peers with whom to share the uncertainty, the resounding support of board members, donors and patrons who pledged to back us come what may, and wonderful wonderful creativity, from artists who simply saw how much they were needed, and refused to give up hope.

And so, we are proud to present this Annual Report to you. It details a year where our company's resilience came into full effect, where we laid the foundations of artist development and partnership working that will define our program for years to come, and where our community significantly manifested its commitment to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism in real and lasting ways.

It was not the year we wished for, but we emerge with strength and resolve, confident of a bright future.

Emma Stenning
Executive Director

Weyni Mengesha
Artistic Director

Message from the Chair of the Board

We started 2020 with great anticipation for what we felt was a very exciting season, the first full season programmed by Weyni. The two shows that opened the season had successful, well received runs and our third show was about to hit the stage when the pandemic hit and everything changed.

But our fantastic staff, led by our terrific senior management team, showed their creativity, made sacrifices and adapted to the 'new reality'. On behalf of the Board I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the entire team.

While there is no question that the pandemic-induced lockdowns and ever-changing rules have been extremely hard on artists and arts workers, moving all programming online has made it more accessible for many people, with geography, and in many cases, price, no longer a barrier, thus allowing the company a broader reach. In addition, we were able to respond more quickly as long-simmering social injustices came to the fore during the year.



We developed a Board policy on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism which was formally endorsed early in 2021. It is based on the values and foundational documents that guide the company's strategies, actions and artistic representations including the Strategic Plan, Statement of Promises and Code of Conduct. It is designed to strengthen the Board's capacity to carry out its responsibilities and advance the company's vision, and ensure the Board holds itself, and its committees, accountable.

While we yearn for the time when we can all gather together in the theatre, we continue to seek ways to tell stories that reflect the cultural make-up of our city while reaching well beyond our borders.

Vanessa Morgan
Board Chair

2020 Artistic
Activity



“Modern and dazzling...
one of the best plays of the
decade.”

– NOW Magazine on *Mother's Daughter*



“Gorgeously acted...
definitely worth the ride.”

– NOW Magazine on *Jesus Hopped the A-Train*

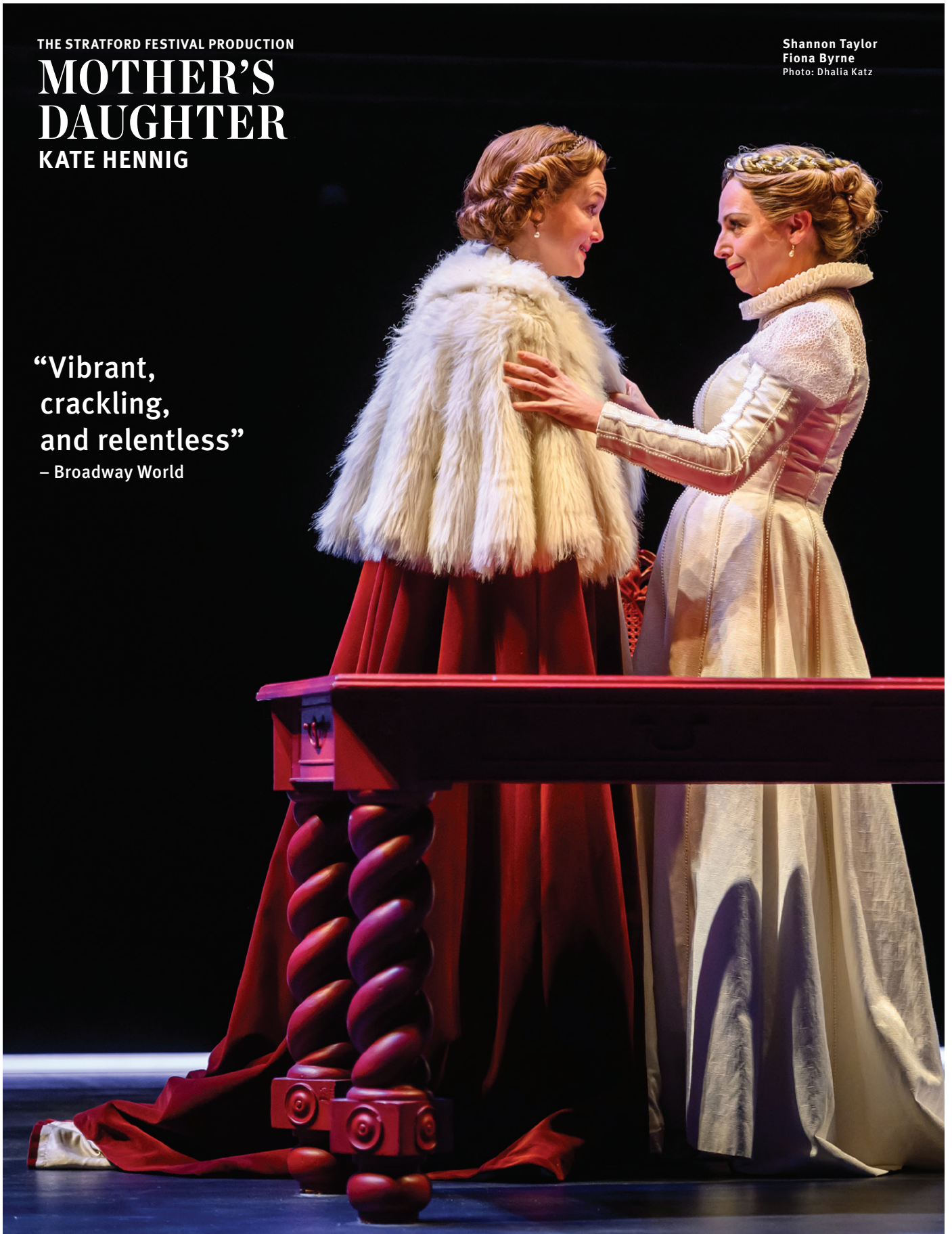
THE STRATFORD FESTIVAL PRODUCTION

MOTHER'S DAUGHTER

KATE HENNIG

Shannon Taylor
Fiona Byrne
Photo: Dhalia Katz

**“Vibrant,
crackling,
and relentless”**
– Broadway World

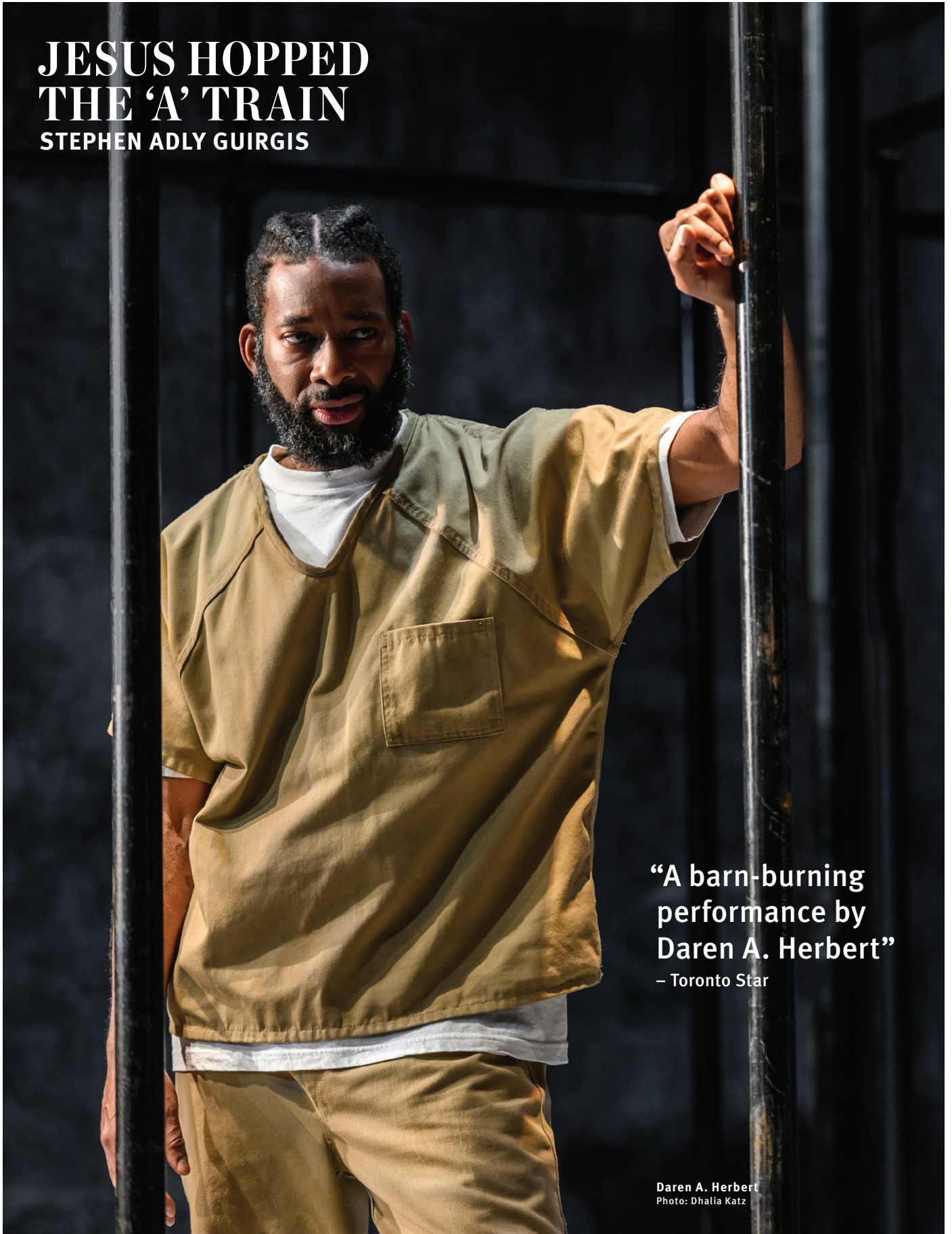


JESUS HOPPED THE 'A' TRAIN

STEPHEN ADLY GUIRGIS

**“A barn-burning
performance by
Daren A. Herbert”**
– Toronto Star

Daren A. Herbert
Photo: Dhalia Katz



Mainstage Productions

MOTHER'S DAUGHTER

A Stratford Festival Production

Playwright: Kate Hennig

Director: Alan Dilworth

Cast: Beryl Bain, Fiona Byrne, Jessica B. Hill, Andrea Rankin, Shannon Taylor, Maria Vaccratsis, Gordon Patrick White

Designers: Lorenzo Savoini, Kimberly Purtell, Debashis Sinha

JESUS HOPPED THE A-TRAIN

Playwright: Stephen Adly Guirgis

Director: Weyni Mengesha

Cast: Diana Donnelly, Daren A. Herbert, Xavier Lopez, Tony Nappo, Gregory Prest

Designers: Ken MacKenzie, Shannon Lea Doyle, Kevin Lamotte, John Gzowski, Simon Fon, Alicia Richardson

Media & Digital Offerings

THE SEAGULL CELEBRATION

Director: Daniel Brooks

Cast: Ghazal Azarbad, Oliver Dennis, Raquel Duffy, Hailey Gillis, Daren A. Herbert, Stuart Hughes, Alex McCooeye, Michelle Monteith, Dan Mousseau, Paolo Santalucia, Sugith Varughese

A CHRISTMAS CAROL CELEBRATION

Director: Michael Shamata

Cast: Derek Boyes, Michael Shamata, Joseph Ziegler, Kaden Boland-Trowbridge, Kevin Bundy, Daniel Chapman-Smith, Oliver Dennis, Deborah Drakeford, Lucien Duncan-Reid, Matthew Edison, Kaia Esnard, Stephen Guy-McGrath, Margaret Huculak, John Jarvis, Tangara Jones, Eponine Lee, Ellora Patnaik, Krystin Pellerin, Jordan Pettie, Henry Ziegler.

A SOULPEPPER CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Cast: Emily Schultz, Mike Ross, Fiona Sauder, Landon Doak, Alana Bridgewater, Jacob Gorzhaltzan, Donavon LeNabat, Ryan Spratt, Joseph Ziegler, Jani Lauzon, Meher Pavri, Nicole Bellamy, Andrew Downing, Travis Knights, Andrew Penner



FRESH INK

Directors: Frank Cox-O'Connell, Guillermo Verdecchia, Weyni Mengesha

Cast: Anton Piatigorsky, Ngọc Hân Trần, Kat Sandler, Rosamund Small, Lisa Berry Haley McGee, Jordan Tannahill, Ngozi Paul, Sarah Treem, Marcus Youssef, Liisa Repo-Martell, Erin Shields, Guillermo Verdecchia, Tara Beagan, Nicolas Billon, Susanna Fournier, Carmen Aguirre, Leah-Simone Bowen, Beverley Cooper, Judith Thompson, Carole Fréchette, Damien Atkins, Rose Napoli, Martin Zimmerman, Diane Flacks, Adam Lazarus, Jill Connell, Lisa Codrington, Keith Barker, Fiona Sauder, Landon Doak, Bronwyn Carradine, Tony Perpuse, Christol Bryan, Lisa Marie DiLiberto, Augusto Bitter, David Yee, Kanika Ambrose, Hannah Moscovitch, Andrew Moodie, Daniel MacIvor, Anosh Irani, Shauntay Grant

FRESH INK: ART & ACTIVISM

Directors: Frank Cox-O'Connell, Guillermo Verdecchia, Weyni Mengesha

Presenters: Idris Goodwin, Motion, Kevin Loring, Kim Senklip Harvey, Andrea Menard, Andrea Scott, Hiro Kanagawa, Mumbi Tindyebwa Otu

THE TRAINING ROOM

Presenters: Philip Akin, Nina Lee Aquino, Esie Mensah, Weyni Mengesha, Daniel Brooks

THE SHOW THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

Director: Frank Cox-O'Connell, Guillermo Verdecchia

Presenters: Akosua Amo-Adem; Daniel Brooks, Jani Lauzon, Mumbi Tindyebwa Otu, Diego Matamoros, Courtney Ch'ng Lancaster, Lorenzo Savoini, Peter Fernandes, Nancy Palk, Lisa Nighswander, Guillermo Verdecchia, Weyni Mengesha

COFFEE CONCERTS

Director: Mike Ross

Cast: Oliver Dennis, Deborah Drakeford, SATE, Mike Ross, Frank Cox-O'Connell, Hailey Gillis, Raha Javanfar, Travis Knights, Nancy Palk, Sophie Ross

AWAKENINGS: REVOLUTION OF LOVE

Creators: Esie Mensah, Assata Shakur, d'bi.young anitafrika

Director: Weyni Mengesha, Lucius Dechausay

QUEER YOUTH CABARET

Cast: Kemi King, Jay Northcott, Isi-Bhakomen, Erum Khan, Sofia Rodriguez, Liz Der, Augusto Bitter, Monica Garrido, Robbie Ahmed, Shaharah Gaznabbi

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS (RECORDINGS)

10 MINUTES OF JOY

Cast: Daren A. Herbert, Pulga Muchochoma, Walter MacLean, Lisa Nighswander, Gloria Mok, Fiona Sauder, Landon Doak

CURTAIN UP YOUTH WORKSHOPS



Community Conversations

HOW SHE LEADS - 2020

Presenters: Andrea Vagianos, Monica Esteves, Nancy Webster, Régine Cadet, Emma Stenning

THE ESSENTIALS

Presenters: Philip Akin, DJ L'Oqenz, Amanda Parris, SATE, Weyni Mengesha

WHEN SHE LEADS

Presenters: Denise Donlon, Jill Andrew, Sarah Bay-Cheng, Samantha Nutt

STAGING JUSTICE

Presenters: Anthony N. Morgan, Annamaria Enenajor, Faisal Mirza, Emily Lam, Weyni Mengesha

Workshops & Readings

BREMERHAVEN

Author / Creator: Gregory Prest

DRAW ME CLOSE (WORKSHOP)

Author / Creator: Jordan Tannahill with the NFB

WAR AND PEACE

Author / Creator: Thomas McKechnie, Anthony MacMahone, Guillermo Verdecchia

SAHAR

Author / Creator: Andrew Moodie

RUN

Author / Creator: Lisa Codrington, with Theatre Calgary

ISLAND OF DOCTOR MOREAU

Author / Creator: Raquel Duffy, Gregory Prest, Ken MacKenzie

GUILLAUME CÔTÉ PROJECT

Author / Creator: Guillaume Côté

ALICE IN WONDERLAND (WORKSHOP)

Author / Creator: Fiona Sauder, Bad Hats Theatre

KITCHENER WATERLOO

Author / Creator: Hailey McGee

GUILLAUME CÔTÉ PROJECT #2

Author / Creator: Guillaume Côté

GONERIL

Author / Creator: Erin Shields

THE SHIRLEY HORN PROJECT

Author / Creator: Falen Johnson

THE SANDRA CALDWELL PROJECT

Author / Creator: Sandra Caldwell

WILD WOMAN

Author / Creator: Kat Sandler

DE PROFUNDIS

Author / Creator: Mike Ross, Sarah Wilson, Gregory Prest

2020 Media
Coverage

“One of the city’s
most important theatres”

– TRNTO

“[Soulpepper] was not only
ahead of bigger institutions
such as the Stratford Fes-
tival, the Arts Club Theatre
Company in Vancouver and
the National Arts Centre
in Ottawa in doing so – but
it also used the clearest
language to examine its own
complicity in what it called
systems of oppression”

– Globe and Mail

ROSE

New York Festivals Radio Awards
Best Children's Audio Book (Gold Medal)

Peter Fernandes, Hailey Gillis,
Sabryn Rock, and Oliver Dennis



JESUS HOPPED THE "A" TRAIN

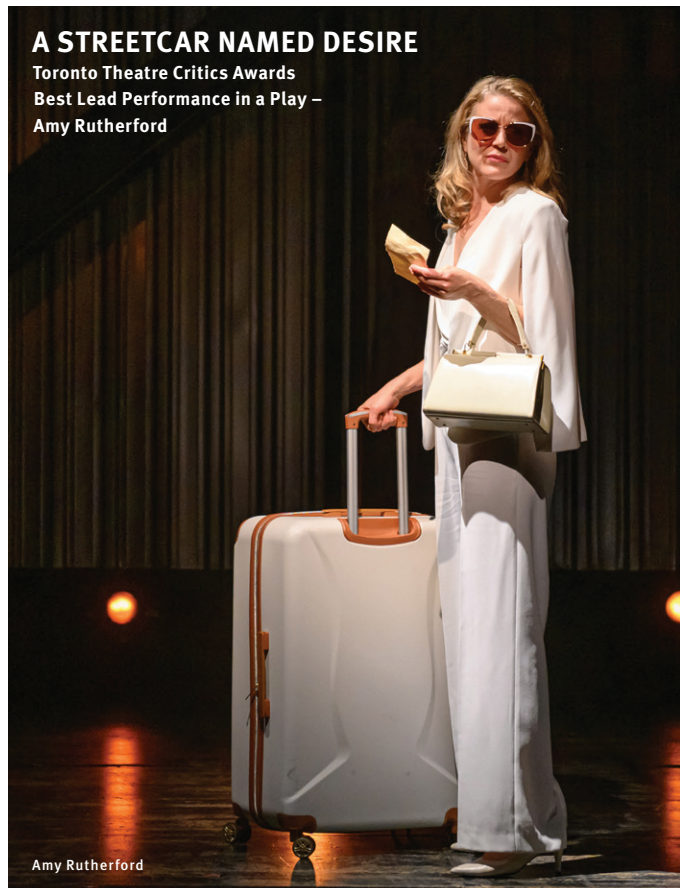
Toronto Theatre Critics Awards
Best Lead Performance in a Play –
Daren A. Herbert



Daren A. Herbert

A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE

Toronto Theatre Critics Awards
Best Lead Performance in a Play –
Amy Rutherford



Amy Rutherford



ALMIGHTY VOICE AND HIS WIFE

Dora Award for Outstanding Scenic / Projection Design

James Dallas Smith
Michaela Washburn

Dora Awards & Nominations

Outstanding Costume Design

- *Betrayal*
Ken MacKenzie
- *Almighty Voice and His Wife*
Kinoo Arcentales
- *The Brothers Size*
Rachel Forbes **Winner**

Outstanding Lighting Design

- *A Streetcar Named Desire*
Kimberly Purtell
- *The Brothers Size*
Raha Javanfar

Outstanding Scenic / Projection Design

- *Almighty Voice and His Wife*
Ken MacKenzie **Winner**
- *The Brothers Size*
Ken MacKenzie
- *A Streetcar Named Desire*
Lorenzo Savoini

Outstanding Sound Design / Composition

- *A Streetcar Named Desire*
Debashis Sinha
- *The Brothers Size*
Kobena Aquaa-Harrison,
Waleed Abdulhamid,
Jasmyn Fyffe,
Thomas Ryder Payne **Winners**

Outstanding Performance in a Featured Role

- *The Brothers Size*
Daren A. Herbert **Winner**
- *Almighty Voice and His Wife*
James Dallas Smith
- *The Brothers Size*
Mazin Elsadig
- *Almighty Voice and His Wife*
Michaela Washburn

Outstanding Performance in a Leading Role

- *A Streetcar Named Desire*
Amy Rutherford
- *Jesus Hopped the 'A' Train*
Daren A. Herbert **Winner**
- *August: Osage County*
Maev Beaty
- *August: Osage County*
Nancy Palk
- *Jesus Hopped the 'A' Train*
Xavier Lopez

Outstanding Direction

- *Almighty Voice and His Wife*
Jani Lauzon
- *The Brothers Size*
Mumbi Tindyebwa Otu **Winner**
- *A Streetcar Named Desire*
Weyni Mengesha

Outstanding Production

- *A Streetcar Named Desire*
- *The Brothers Size* **Winner**

THE BROTHERS SIZE

Daren A. Herbert,
Marcel Stewart,
Mazin Elsadig

“Soulpepper's staging of *The Brothers Size* took home the most awards throughout the evening, winning five including Outstanding Production”

– Playbill



Online Programming Highlights

CBC Arts

- The best performances, talks, art classes and more: *Fresh Ink*.

Toronto Star

- Best bets for a virtual theatre fix during COVID-19: *Coffee Concerts*.

NOW Magazine

- 10 essential Toronto Pride events: *Queer Place, Queer Space (Queer Youth Cabaret)*
- The best virtual holiday events in Toronto: *A Christmas Carol Live Reunion*

COFFEE CONCERTS



Xavier Lopez and Daren A Herbert on Breakfast Television:

BT 30 YEARS

SOULPEPPER ACTORS DAREN HERBERT AND XAVIER LOPEZ TALK DIVERSITY IN THEATRE

EASTBOUND 403

DUNDAS STREET NOW **15min** NOR **7m**

MAVIS ROAD MAP DATA © 2020 G

TUE 3° WED -2° THU 0° FRI -1° SAT -3°

TIME ■ **WOMAN CONVICTED OF KILLING 7-YEAR-OLD STEPSON IN 2002 ALLOWED** **8:34 A**

Weyni Mengesha on TVO's The Agenda

SUBSCRIBE TO THE AGENDA PODCAST: tvo.org/theagenda

a. **A DIRECTOR TAKES CENTRE STAGE**
 Producer: Sandra Gionas @sandragionas

tvo



**2020 by the
Numbers**

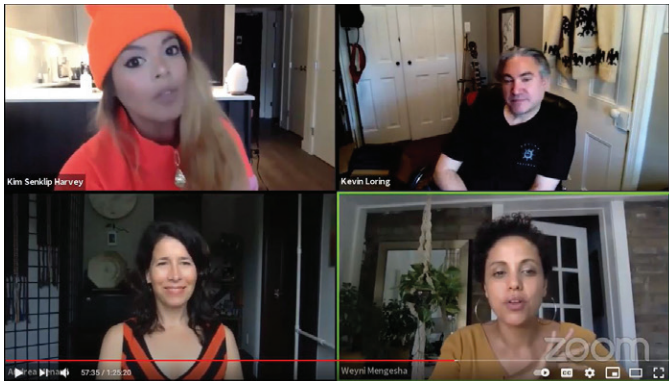
**You were there for us
when it counted:**

**1,881 households
donated to our
Individual Giving
Campaign (45% were
first time Donors!)**...

**40,465 online
audiences
for our digital
programming**...

We Counted the Minutes and the Minutiae

- 15** projects in development workshops
- 37** Staff who participated in full-company ASL classes
- 45%** of contracts issued to IBPOC artists
- 49.5** hours of online content created and shared FREE
- 47%** of website visitors were under 34 year olds.
- 59** Artist Educators worked on our youth programs
- 148** countries that our online audiences visited us from
- 223** Artists employed
- 413** hours of youth workshops facilitated
- 574** participants took part in our free youth and community programs



- 1,159** Free 25 & Under Tickets booked in the first two months of the program
- 1,700** views for our 10 Minutes of Joy series
- 1,881** Households donated to our Individual Giving Campaign (45% were first time Donors!)

8,444 YouTube views of A Revolution of Love, an Awakenings project commissioned by Toronto History Museums



\$10,000 approx. donations raised for the Fred Victor community food bank by audiences at our online A Christmas Carol Celebration cast reunion.

11,950 tickets issued to *Mother's Daughter*, and *Jesus Hopped the 'A' Train*, our only two staged productions in 2020

40,000 estimated cumulative hours of ZOOM meetings by all staff

40,465 online audiences for our digital programming

419,408 unique website page views over the year

890,000+ audiences who tuned into the series finale episode of *Kim's Convenience*, after five amazing seasons.



**Education:
Youth Programming
+ Community
Engagement**

“As an emerging theatre-maker, this program was an invaluable experience. It has given me incredible tools and training that I will be using throughout my career. I can imagine the impact on the theatre world of having a new generation of artists go through this program, and ones like it, and it is a glorious vision.”

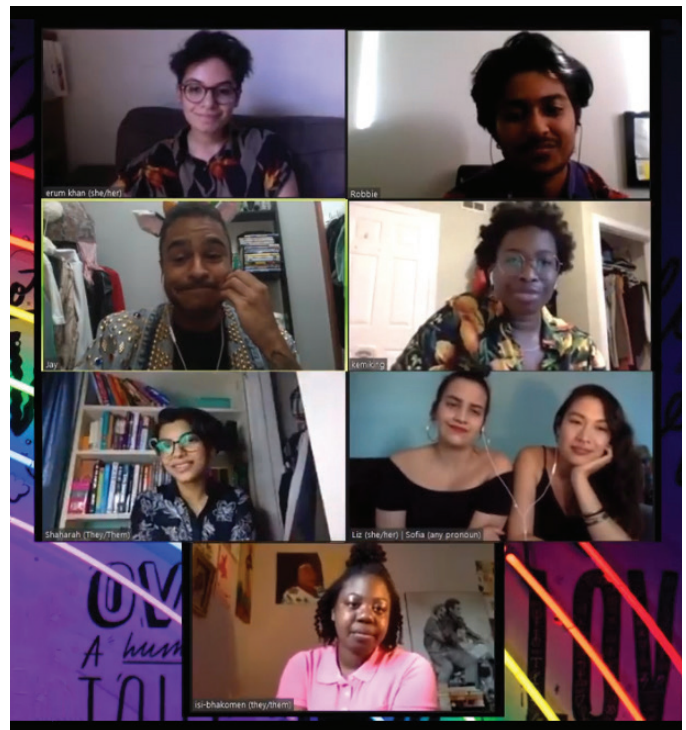
– Youth Participant

Youth Programming + Community Engagement

Soulpepper’s youth and community engagement activities moved to virtual offerings in 2020 allowing us to continue year-round barrier-free programming. In 2020 Soulpepper offered the *Curtain Up Program* (Spring and Fall sessions), *The Queer Youth Cabaret*, and the *Summer Youth Intensive Programs* (Solo Show and Collective Creation). We engaged with community organizations through our access program, providing resources for organizations to support their work digitally.

2020 was the first year of the *Queer Youth Cabaret*, which featured eight incredible 2SLGBTQIA+ artists and performers aged 14-30. The virtual cabaret explored how young artists define queer spaces. The program included mentorship opportunities, directing and technical assistance in filming their pieces at home, compensation, and a platform for queer and trans emerging artists. The program was listed on NOW Toronto’s “10 essential Toronto Pride parties and events for 2020” and on CBC’s “Your 10 best bets for Online Events (week of June 22)”. The event was viewed by 422 people and together we raised and donated \$780 for The519 to support their COVID-19 relief service programs and \$1,695 for Friends of Ruby to support their work with LGBTQ2S+ Black, Indigenous, POC youth drop in programs.

The Summer Youth Online Intensives were a set of two virtual performance-based programs that took place in the summer of 2020. Both programs gave youth an opportunity to stay creative, connect with theatre professionals, provided access to all communities across Canada, and provided workshops in using online mediums effectively in theatrical creation. The groups met 4 days a week, for two weeks in workshops and then were given assignments to complete in their own time. Participants in the Solo Show Creation learned to deepen their storytelling through character work, mask creation, writing exercises and performance. In the *Collective Creation* program, the group worked on ensemble, mindfulness, movement, writing and performance.



“I just finished watching the show and IT WAS SO WONDERFUL!!! Every bit of it was so thoughtful and full of care. I'm so happy I got to see it, sending big thanks to you and your team for the hard work it must have taken to put this together. I'm sure it will be a beacon of hope for many youth, and queers overall, in isolation right now.”
 – Queer Youth Cabaret viewer



**Summarized
Financial
Statements**

**It was a year of
difficult decisions and
adjustments, looking
to ensure the well-
being of our company
today, as well as
our sustainability
for tomorrow.**

Summarized Statement of Financial Position

as at December 31

	2020	2019
Assets	\$	\$
Current Assets		
Cash	668	1,058
Accounts receivable	736	251
Prepaid expenses & other assets	95	333
	1,499	1,642
Capital assets, net	347	416
	1,846	2,058
Liabilities & Net Assets		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable, & accrued liabilities	429	547
Deferred revenues	1,895	1,444
	2,324	1,991
Deferred contributions	320	385
	2,644	2,376
Net Assets		
External endowment funds, market value \$7,567		
Accumulated (deficit) surplus	(798)	(318)
	1,846	2,058

All figures reported in \$000's.

Summarized Statement of Operations

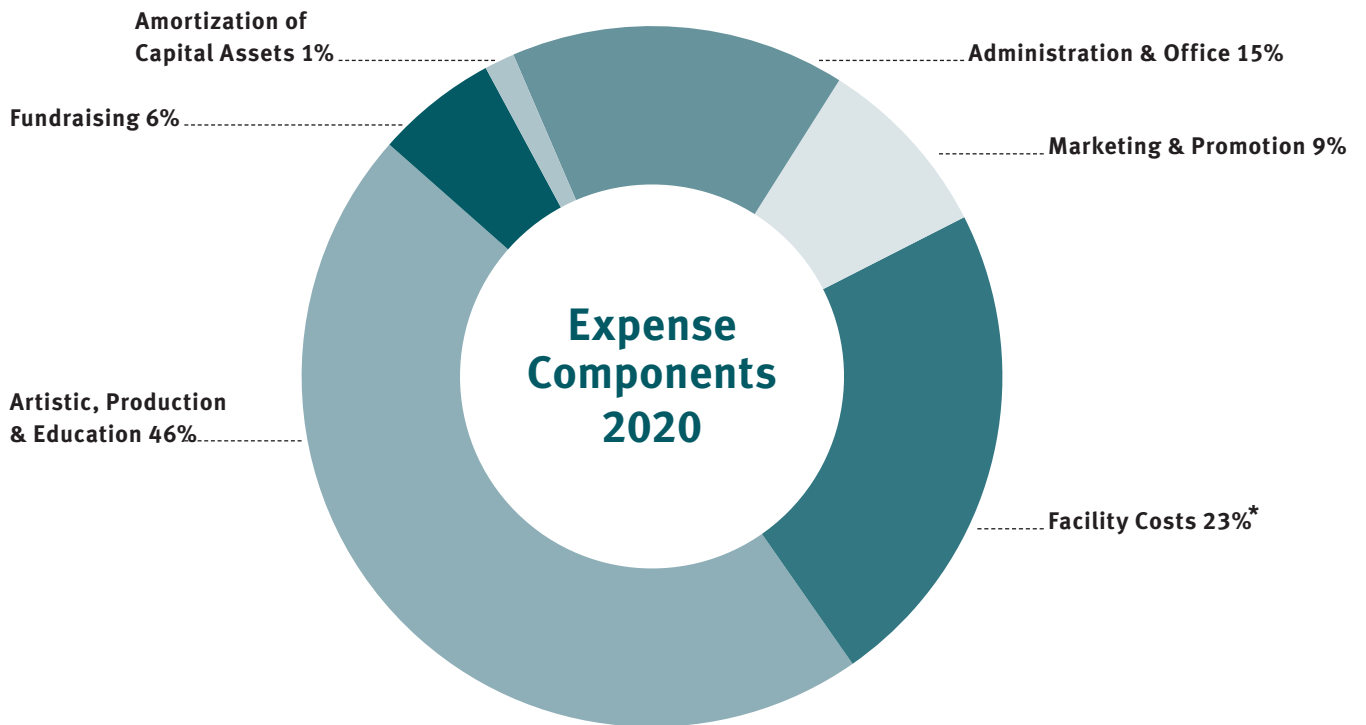
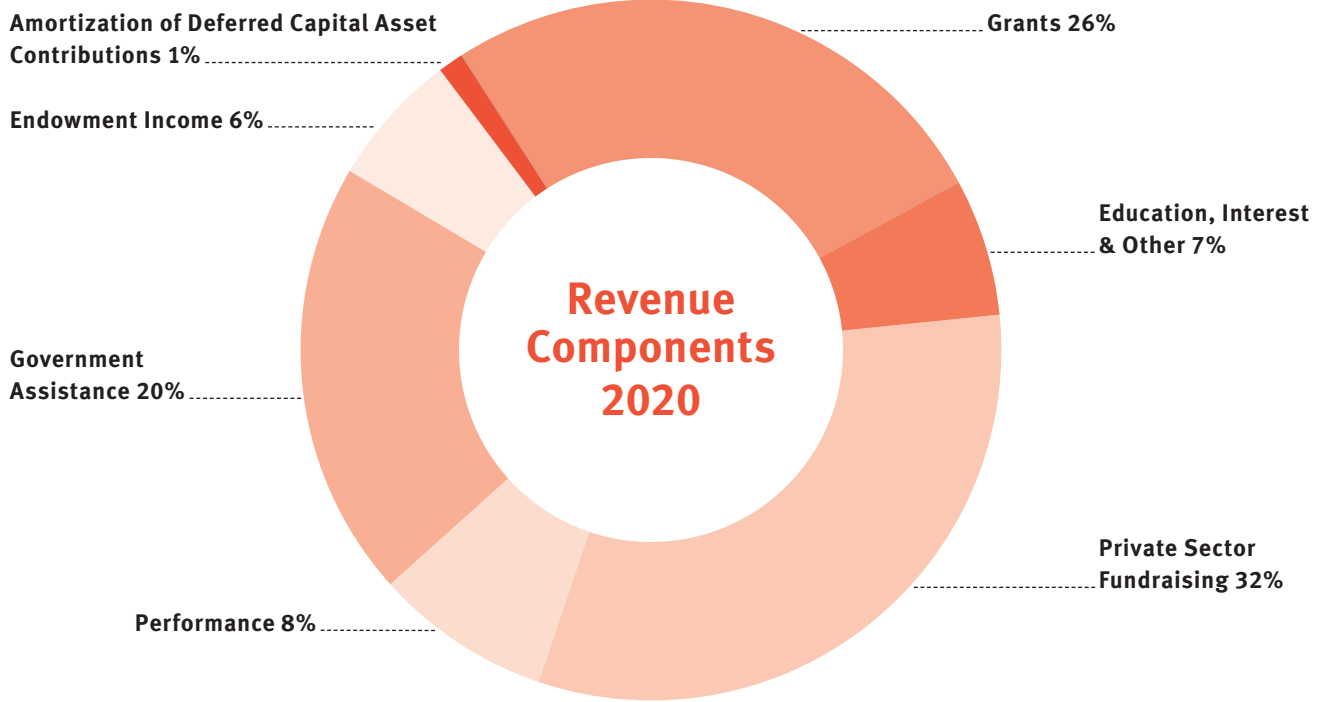
for the year ended December 31

	2020	2019
Revenues	\$	\$
Grants	1,453	1,504
Donations	1,450	2,789
Government Assistance	1,121	-
Performance	454	3,410
Other	351	408
Endowment income	344	359
Sponsorships	315	899
Amortization of deferred capital asset contributions	65	65
	5,553	9,434
Expenses		
Artistic and production	3,230	6,073
Administration & office	1,087	1,178
Marketing & promotion	537	1,126
Contributions to joint venture operations	456	508
Fundraising	339	619
Facility operating costs	310	326
Education programs	221	281
Amortization of capital assets	84	81
Joint venture cost recoveries	(231)	(440)
	6,033	9,752
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses for the year	(480)	(318)
Accumulated (deficit) surplus, beginning of the year	(318)	-
Accumulated surplus (deficit), end of year	(798)	(318)

All figures reported in \$000's.

These summarized financial statements are derived from audited financial statements issued with an unqualified opinion under date April 27, 2021.

Charitable organization #869698449 RR0001



*Facility costs include Young Centre rental costs, Baillie Centre operating costs, and contributions to Young Centre operations

DONORS

The following pages acknowledge the community of people who provide invaluable support to the company and make possible Soulpepper's work on-stage and in our community.

Corporate & Foundation Supporters

\$125,000+

The Catherine
& Maxwell Meighen Foundation
Scotiabank Group
The Slight Family Foundation

\$75,000-\$124,999

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Polar Asset Management Partners
Kingfisher Foundation

\$10,000-\$24,999

The Joan & Clifford Hatch Foundation
Pitblado Family Foundation
The Polar Foundation
Toronto Foundation

\$5,000-\$9,999

The Browning Watt Foundation
The Patrick
& Barbara Keenan Foundation
The Lewis Jackson
& Dale Gardiner Foundation
The McLean Foundation
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Up to \$4,999

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Mill Street Brew Pub
Steinway Piano Gallery Toronto
Zoomer Radio

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Major Gifts

\$50,000+

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Artistic Director's Circle + Special Projects

\$25,000 – \$49,999

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Bill Morneau & Nancy McCain
Jacqueline Moss
Sanjay Nakra
James O'Sullivan & Lucie Vallée
Sarah Scott & David Powell*
Paul & Jan Sabourin*
Eric Wetlaufer

Heart & Soul

\$5,000-\$9,999

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Janet & Bill Young*

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\$1,000 – \$2,499

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 Felicity Wells
 2 anonymous supporters of Soulpepper

Friend

\$250-\$999

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