



NATIONAL
THEATRE
SCHOOL
OF CANADA

ANNUAL
REPORT

—
2019
2020

Supporting our community

AND CHARTING NEW PATHS



WE ARE PROUD TO PRESENT THE CLASS OF 2020

— INTERPRÉTATION



Jérémie Caron
(Montréal, QC)



Héroïse Desrochers
(Montréal, QC)



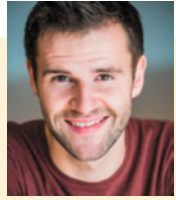
Esther Duplessis
(Thetford Mines, QC)



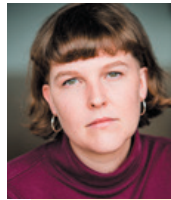
Aurélie Fortin
(Québec, QC)



Bozidar Krcevinac
(Montréal, QC
et Serbie)



Étienne Laforge
(Montréal, QC)



Janie Lapierre
(Boucherville, QC)



**Cédric
Lavigne Larente**
(St-André
d'Argenteuil, QC)



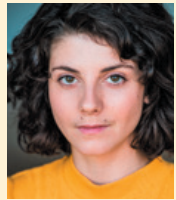
Loïc McIntyre
(Montréal, QC)



**Marie-Madeleine
Sarr**
(Montréal, QC
et Sénégal)

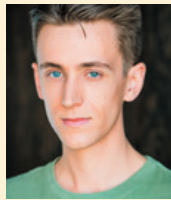


**Pierre-Alexis
St-Georges**
(Lévis, QC)



Valérie Tellos
(Repentigny, QC)

— ACTING



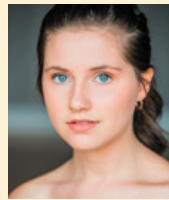
Michael Bell
(North Saanich, BC)



Brynn Godenir
(Winnipeg, MB)



Todd Houseman
(Edmonton, AB)



Brontae Hunter
(Kincardine, ON)



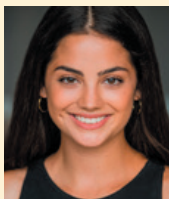
Ray Jacildo
(Toronto, ON et
Manila, Philippines)



Patrick Jeffrey
(Long Creek, PEI)



Wahsont:io Kirby
(Kahnawake, QC)



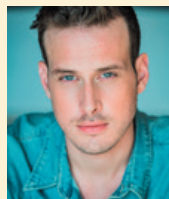
**Sadie
Laflamme-Snow**
(Ottawa, ON)



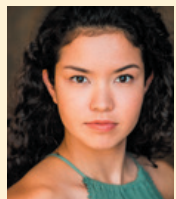
Talijah Levene
(Toronto, ON)



Erin Loretta Mackey
(North River, NL)



Drew Moore
(Ottawa, ON)



Erika Prevost
(Montréal, QC)



Savion Roach
(Scarborough, ON)



Espoir Segbeaya
(Nelson, BC)

— RÉSIDENCE RESIDENCY



Sylvia Cloutier
(Iqaluit, NU)
Indigenous Artists
Residencies



Soleil Launière
(Mashteuiatsh, QC)
Résidences pour
artistes autochtones

— CRÉATION ET PRODUCTION



Dominique Boisvert
(Montréal, QC)



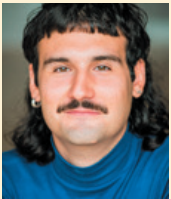
Natasha Descôteaux
(Montréal, QC)



Félix-Antoine Gauthier
(Repentigny, QC)



Alice Germain
(Montréal, QC)



Guillaume Lafontaine-Moisan
(Montréal, QC)



Flavie Lemée
(Freilighsburg, QC)



Annie Préfontaine
(Montréal, QC)



Charlie Loup Turcot
(Saint-Anicet, QC)

— PRODUCTION DESIGN AND TECHNICAL ARTS



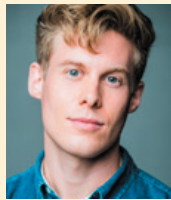
Zach Fedora
(Kingston, ON)



Patrick Fitzsimmons
(Calgary, AB)



Leslie Hernandez
(Windsor, ON)



Christian Horoszczak
(Mississauga, ON)



Katherine Kellner
(Toronto, QC)



Paige Prystupa
(Calgary, AB)



Michael Wanless
(Calgary, AB)



Ryan Wilcox
(Saint John, NB)

— MISE EN SCÈNE

— DIRECTING



J.J. Houle
(Sorel-Tracy, QC)



Mudorch Schon
(Montreal, QC)



Angelica Schwartz
(Winnipeg, MB)

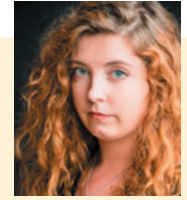
— SCÉNOGRAPHIE SET AND COSTUME DESIGN



Margarita Brodie
(Unionville, ON)



Mathilde Donnard
(Montréal, QC)



Alison Helmer
(Winnipeg, MB)



Nadine Jaafar
(Montréal, QC et Beyrouth, Liban)



Jawon Kang
(Toronto, ON and Seoul, South Korea)



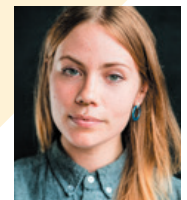
Marianne Lonergan-Pilotto
(Longueuil, QC)



Ximena Pinilla
(Bogotá, CO)



Wendy Kim Pires
(Vendargues, FR)



Joline Rath
(Saskatoon, SK)

— PLAYWRITING



Gillian Clark
(Halifax, NS)



Kalale Dalton-Lutale
(Toronto, ON)

— ÉCRITURE DRAMATIQUE



Caroline Bélisle
(Moncton, NB)



Mathieu Renaud
(Montréal, QC)


OUR MISSION

To serve the evolving needs of Canadian theatre, the National Theatre School of Canada (NTS):

- Provides incomparable training in French and English to actors, directors, playwrights, designers and production specialists to prepare them to work in professional theatre;
- Delivers a broad range of community programs in order to make theatre more accessible to all Canadians.

OUR VISION

As a global leader in theatre training, NTS shares its expertise and resources with a broad and diverse community of Canadians to ensure that the performing arts continue to play an important role in society.



From left to right:
Lydia Sherknies (*Interprétation 2021, Montreal*)
and Irdens Exantus (*Interprétation 2021, Laval*) at
École Champlain primary school in the Montreal's
Hochelaga-Maisonneuve neighbourhood, during
the tour of *Spectacle jeune public*, October 17, 2019.
Photo credit: Maxime Côté.



WORD FROM THE CHAIR

— ALBERTA G. CEFIS

Chair of the Board of Directors

The 2019-2020 year was one of significant upheaval, which gave the National Theatre School of Canada (NTS) and its staff an opportunity to demonstrate their *savoir-faire*, and perhaps more importantly, their *savoir-être*, a certain quality of spirit.

As soon as public health authorities announced the distancing measures that brought NTS activities to a halt, the School's first concern was for its community. Then, a second crisis followed—this time a social one—after the tragic death of George Floyd. The School listened, recognized its part in systemic racism, and took concrete actions to ensure that all artists receive training that not only matches their potential and experiences, but also enriches the Canadian theatre by nurturing their voices and providing them with the necessary tools to ride the waves of change.

From the very beginning of the health crisis until the end of the year, the School was able to ensure that all contacts with professional training teachers could be maintained and, as such, to continue the work that had been started with respect to the five priorities announced at the start of the year:

- **To increase the scope of our outstanding professional training by restructuring how the Monument-National (M-N) is used so as to better serve the School's mission;**
- **To expand our community engagement strategies through the NTS Festival, by using it as a meaningful way to deliver programs to the School's broad community of stakeholders;**
- **To work with our partners to create a clear roadmap that will help us become an institution that is more open to artists and Indigenous communities, and increasingly reflective of our country's diversity;**
- **To create a new organizational structure and develop better tools to support our expanded programming;**
- **To generate new revenues that will support the School's goals and aspirations.**

The unprecedented circumstances of 2019-2020 validated the relevance of the transformative work undertaken by NTS, and also confirmed current priorities.

Throughout this crisis, my fellow Board members remained mindful, shared their ideas, and offered their support to the NTS team. They have my sincere gratitude. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome our new Board members, as on November 13, 2020,

we are joined by Line Beauchamp and Richard Brott; and signal the departure of those directors whose terms have come to an end, Jean-François Lacroix, Jacques J.M Shore, Anthony Tattersfield, and Rosemary Thompson. Your contributions have been valued and appreciated. I also wish to mark the passing of Monique Mercure, one of Quebec's greatest cultural icons and an important figure in the history of the School. She had been the School's Director (1991-1997), the Artistic Director of the French section (1997-2000), and a Lifetime Governor (from October 2000).

The NTS family grieved the loss of quite a few celebrities who have shaped its history. Not least of all, Michelle Rossignol, who became Program Director for Interprétation and Écriture dramatique (1980-1985) after working as Assistant Director for the Interprétation program (1971 à 1980), and was a winner of the Gascon-Thomas Award (1992). We also lost Ada Slaughter, who had been a generous benefactor and wonderful patron for many decades.

Just as NTS supports its artists, the School has also received a great deal of help which has enabled it to carry out its mission. I wish to express our gratitude to our partners who have supported us throughout the year, far exceeding our expectations. This includes, first and foremost, Canadian Heritage, the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec and other public partners, as well as numerous patrons, foundations, and businesses.

Despite a year of unprecedented upheaval, I can confirm that, financially, the National Theatre School is still in good shape, as the results in the attached financial statements show. This good financial health is due in large part to the unwavering commitment of NTS staff and the team of teachers who all pitched in and worked tirelessly during this crisis to keep the School on an even keel.

And finally, I wish to highlight that the arts sector, and the theatre community in particular, is going through an extremely challenging period in Canada and elsewhere. And while artists and artisans may be deprived of means, they are certainly not lacking in passion. As always, they have demonstrated empathy, creativity, and resilience in order to create, produce, and deliver. Today, we are confronted with circumstances that call for even greater efforts, but we also know that, together, we have a profound and positive influence in this world.



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

— GIDEON ARTHURS

First of all, I would like to add my voice to that of our chair in acknowledging the extremely difficult period that the arts sector, and in particular the theatre world, is going through. I also wish to acknowledge and applaud the courage, perseverance, innovation, and humanity shown by our entire community—students, pedagogical team, and staff—in the face of these extraordinary and unprecedented circumstances.

The National Theatre School of Canada (NTS) kicked off the year with 172 students and artist residents enrolled in its professional training programs, and thousands of other students and teachers across the country benefitting from its Community Engagement initiatives. However, the COVID-19 pandemic and life-changing social events impelled us to quickly adapt to circumstances that the School had never had to face. Following the advice of public authorities, all NTS activities were suspended as of midnight, Friday, March 13, 2020. This meant that everything from professional training and community programs to public events at the Monument-National (M-N) had come to a halt. In spite of this, NTS continued to offer and share its expertise and resources to support young artists and various communities across Canada in ways never imagined before.

The 59th year of NTS turned out to be exceptional in many ways and, despite complex circumstances, lessons learned throughout the 2019-2020 school year had the effect of propelling transformations that had already been in the works.

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

From the very start of the pandemic, the School's first concern was to support its community. Since the health, well-being, and safety of students and staff is its top priority, NTS opened up all channels of communication to inform and support everyone involved.

The Artistic Directors and administration immediately implemented measures that would enable courses, discussions, and follow-up meetings to continue online. Starting March 30, NTS launched virtual training activities in order to achieve its pedagogical objectives. In this way, students were able to continue their studies from home and still finish their school year on May 7, 2020.

The School had little choice but to cancel the end-of-year shows, a truly heart-wrenching decision. However, for the first time ever, the annual exhibition by second-year students in the Set and Costume Design program took place online, providing them with an opportunity to acquire new skills. Students in the Playwriting program, for their part, achieved a tour de force with the help of fellow students from other programs by adapting their final-year projects for the Web.

The darkest cloud was that the 60 graduates, including 2 residents, did not get to enjoy the ceremony and celebrations that had been planned for May 7. Nevertheless, these events have (only) been postponed until a later date!

Building on the experience gained from turning to web-based training, and with the goal to support Canadian artists, the French and English sections began, as of June, to offer online training to artists across the country.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The National Theatre School DRAMAFEST had gotten off to a great start with 7,500 high school students and 400 communities across the country. Then, with little warning, all activities in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, and in the Atlantic provinces came to an abrupt halt. NTS therefore set about supporting and guiding volunteers and secondary students and, with teacher-volunteers, began the process of reinventing the festival for next year.

From March 23, NTS also broke new ground with the launch of Art Apart, an initiative geared toward all students and recent graduates of schools across the country that specialize in the arts. Thanks to funding and support received from Power Corporation of Canada and CBC, 100 projects by emerging artists were selected from over 575 submissions and showcased online as of May 2020. Because of this program, a hundred \$750 scholarships were awarded to young artists to help them weather the present crisis.

The 59th year of NTS turned out to be exceptional in many ways and, despite complex circumstances, lessons learned throughout the 2019-2020 school year had the effect of propelling transformations that had already been in the works.

— GIDEON ARTHURS

In keeping with its vision, NTS shared its expertise and resources with a wide and diverse community of Canadians, thus helping to secure the important role that performing arts play in society.

THE MONUMENT-NATIONAL CAMPUS

Even though all pedagogical activities, performances, and venue rentals were cancelled as of March 13, 2020, work to transform the Monument-National (M-N) continued. The new vision for this historic building's future was finalized and renovation plans for the building, whose history spans 126 years, were set in motion.

After more than 42 years of intensive use, and twenty-six years since the last renovations, many aspects of the building are naturally nearing the end of their operational usefulness. The building needs major work to ensure its stability and to protect the value of its assets.

Following the results of four commissioned studies carried out since 2009 to evaluate different business models for the M-N, it was concluded that its role in association with training activities should be expanded, by opening its doors to the NTS community while also developing partnerships that will position it as a mainstay of innovation for the performing arts, thereby maximizing the mission, vision, and values of NTS.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

The tragic death of George Floyd on May 25, 2020 profoundly impacted our students, graduates, staff, and our society as a whole. In the days that followed, the School reached out to its community, particularly to black, Indigenous, and racialized students, to let them know it stood in solidarity with them.

NTS recognizes the systemic racism that these students face as well as the pain, anger, and fear that they may well feel. The School has also acknowledged its own complicity, as an institution that whereby in the past it too has marginalized the voices and cultures of some while benefitting from white privilege.

The administration has opened the dialogue with its racialized students and has committed to going much further than simply acknowledging the problems. We fast-tracked the implementation of our plan to combat systemic racism. The School's administrative body wants to learn how to confront racism and social injustice within its communities, school, and in each of us individuals. The work ahead of us is complex and will demand a lot of patience and a willingness to listen, learn, and truly understand. The School is determined to see these collective efforts lead to a healthier and more open theatrical milieu.

TOMORROW IS NOW

As soon as the school year came to a close, our teams got to work to ensure that there would be a full and safe return to classes in September 2020.

Modifications to the curriculum forced us to think outside the box and sometimes even create new paradigms. Not being able to physically get together in the same room is something to be mourned by all, but the constraints that we are confronted with have also stimulated our sense of creativity. This bold experiment has allowed us to think about innovative ways to bring artists and the public closer together.

NTS is in a period of transition and the next few years will be a filled with opportunity. Thanks to a visionary plan of strategic transformation, the support of its community, and the incredible hard work of its staff and team of teachers, NTS is well positioned and committed to fully carrying out its mission—that of meeting the ever-evolving needs of Canadian theatre.

Clémence Dufresne-Deslières (*Interprétation 2021*, Montreal) with the 4th-year students in the *Interprétation* program, in *Dossier Incertitude*, directed by Marie Charlebois; presented January to 18, 2020. Photo credit: Maxime Côté.





MESSAGES FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

— ALISA PALMER

Director Acting, Directing and Residency Programs
Artistic Director, English Section

Report for the Annual General Meeting National Theatre School of Canada October 3, 2020

Arts' training at NTS develops students' skills and supports their emerging talents. Key to their training is their engagement in ongoing national, international, and intracultural conversations about what Canadian theatre can and should be, and how we, as artists, and as citizens, can continue to shape and transform our art form, our profession and our society. Our desire is to strengthen the future of theatre and to do so by supporting the next generation of artists and theatre makers.

The 2019/20 school year offered incredible fuel for this objective. It also presented unbelievable challenges.

In the fall of 2019, we welcomed robust, energetic and diverse cohorts into our programs; the productions on our stages featured provocative material; our curriculum and teaching teams expanded to provide richer opportunities for a wider range of our students and residents.

Indra's Web, the first production of our school year, was a collective creation featuring intergenerational stories from our students' own histories, told through movement, song, dance, projections, food cooked on stage, and puppets. No theatrical stone was left unturned.

We produced, for the first time, and on our largest stage, a play by an Indigenous artist; Marie Clements' *Burning Vision*. With its multiplicity of time, place and cultural perspectives and under the sensitive direction of Geordie Theatre's Mike Payette, *Burning Vision* provided opportunities for students in production, scenography, and acting programs to create a rich and visceral storytelling style and to bring a challenging and important narratives to life. We were honoured to welcome Ms. Clements herself as an artistic advisor to the production.

With the second- and third-year cohorts, we presented a selection of short plays by Suzan-Lori Parks, a leading African American playwright, whose groundbreaking work has garnered a MacArthur Fellowship and a Pulitzer Prize. It was my pleasure to direct this project and to introduce Parks' provocative and passionate work to the students.

These are a few examples of the range of explorations that we engaged in until March, when we closed the school due to COVID. At that point everything came to a halt.

We were on pause for a brief time as we gathered ourselves together and moved ourselves apart. Then we started up again. But this time, online.

At NTS we are committed to supporting our students' growth and artistic development. While it seemed counterintuitive to train theatre artists in a digital format, under these circumstances, moving our training online was the only way to live up to our commitment.

As per the government guidelines, all e-learning was to be voluntary. We determined that, at the moment of shut down, our students were, in fact, equipped either to graduate or to move forward to their next year, and consequently, we offered online training as an option, inviting our students to stay with us and continue their training until the end of the semester. It was our belief and hope that this gesture would keep our students growing and learning while also offering solace, as so many of our students from across Canada found themselves cut off from their families at this frightening time. We were happy to see that the overwhelming majority of students joined us online and continued to engage in their artistic development. Similarly, with the support of the school, we were able to fulfill our commitments to our guest teachers, who, as freelance artists, had suddenly lost work *en masse*.

From front to back:
Wahsonti:io Kirby (Acting
2020, Kahnawake) and
Todd Houseman (Acting
2020, Edmonton, AB)
in *Burning Vision*,
directed by Mike Payette;
presented December
9 to 14, 2019, in the
Monument-National's
Ludger-Duvernay Theatre.
Photo credit: Maxime Côté.





Harrison Thomas
(Directing 2018) during
the *Directors Project*, 2018.
Photo credit: NTS.

It may be hard to imagine what is involved in moving a theatre school online. Imagine those shapeshifting cartoon vehicles: a car tearing down the highway magically transforms into a rocket ship and launches into space. We found ourselves launching into (cyber) space, doing something we never imagined would be necessary, let alone possible. Behind the scenes, this pivot, a movement that evokes a deft and simple action, was anything but that. It involved a review of all the remaining classes, an assessment of what could be transferred online, what would be deferred and what had to be replaced, an outreach to all our teachers, and a formidable retraining and retooling of everything we do from meetings, to teaching, to rehearsing, to presenting. And we did it, relatively quickly, without really any precedent or role model to follow, and—thanks to the commitment, curiosity and compassion of the students and community of teachers—this arduous process led to an in-depth learning on all fronts and even proved to be inspiring.

One of the highlights of our online transition was the New Words Festival. Our final project of the year, New Words is the premiere of plays by our graduating playwrights, directed, in alternating years, by our graduating directors. It was an inspiration to see our two directing students' rapid and confident re-staging of the student plays online. Seizing this unanticipated opportunity to integrate a chapter of their training in digital directing, the directors, playwrights and graduating students in the scenography, production and acting programs adapted their work for digital (and in one case even interactive) engagement. This translation of material is something we are now seeing professional theatres engage with on a regular basis. Our young directors were fast out of the gate.

These students were also part of a core team of national facilitators for the National Arts Centre Green Rooms' Climate Change Cycle. Co-presented with the Festival of Digital Arts (FOLDA) they were invited to share HAVEN, a work they developed in their digital directing unit (and over Zoom before Zoom became a household word). This event connected performers in Montreal,

Toronto and Winnipeg and was an early iteration of the online gatherings that have become part of our mainstream (pandemic) theatre practice. These projects also gave NTS national visibility, and I was proud to share these, but also NTS' holistic approach to online arts learning with a wider public via radio interviews, webinars and teleconferences.

Another project that was adapted to this brave new world is a new piece by our Indigenous Artist in Residence, Sylvia Cloutier. Sylvia had been invited to present her new piece this fall at Weesagechak, a festival for Indigenous works. Due to COVID, part of her creation process was cancelled but Sylvia will now be focusing on a technical revisiting of her piece in preparation for a Livestream presentation that will be shared privately with a selected audience, many of whom are based in her home community in the North. Livestreaming is now part of the Production curriculum and will be facilitated by an Indigenous student in the production program, who will also assist Sylvia with technical aspects and production.

We experienced an enormous learning curve last spring, and the learning continues. While we technically completed the school year in May, we didn't, in fact, stop working—we rather "pivoted" once again to reckon with bringing students back to the building in safety. The gifts that emerged over these past months now shape our training; zoom has allowed us to bring more artists and teachers together from across the country and has helped us overcome the geographic challenges that the English section faces; we have become courageous about time and have truly understood the need to slow down; we have been able to focus with deeper empathy and compassion on the needs of our students and to interrogate with deeper humility how we can better support our younger generation of artists, particularly Indigenous, Black, and artists of colour, as well as artists from other equity seeking communities.

Our section was hitting its stride before COVID; the program directors and full-time teachers who make up our section worked with joy, creativity, inspiring rigour and incredible humility. This last chapter has catapulted us into the stratosphere in terms of collaboration. The work my colleagues continue to accomplish goes far above and beyond the call of duty. I lay not only our survival but also our continuing growth at the feet of my team—Andrea Lundy, Stephane Longpre, Andrea Romaldi, Matjash Mrozewski, Caroline Guertin, Rebecca Harper, Laurel Thomson, Doug Price as well as newer members of our team, Floyd Ricketts and Jani Lauzon who joined us over the summer with fresh eyes, ears, hearts, expertise and abundant skills that will help us move into this next, equally complex, school year.

The arrival of the pandemic and the vital and overdue reckonings with inequity and injustice that accompanied it, have tested our capacity to live up to our own teaching, to be the change we want to see. At the heart of all our training—and of theatre itself—is the recognition of the power of transformation. It strikes me as poetic timing that this radical chapter has taken place in the 60th year of our school. I'm sure the School's founders could never have foreseen this turn of events. Their vision of NTS as a leading light in the transformation of Canadian theatre is a reminder not only of our responsibility, but also of our opportunity—to respond to what the times throw in our path, and also to address what is yet to come: to meet the moment and transform the future.

Last fall, almost exactly a year ago as I write this, and thanks to the support of the School, I had the privilege of participating in a leadership program at the Banff Centre: Truth and Reconciliation Through Right Relations, led by Indigenous leaders, academics and elders. We spent days in reflection, in exchange and in deep listening, immersed in profoundly complex and difficult learning. We were invited by the program leaders to share in the 7 Grandfathers' Teachings to guide us through these challenging days. With thanks to Elder Dila Houle, Elder Sykes Powderface, and members of the faculty at Banff, I share them with you today as they were shared with me:

- **LOVE** - Approach the conversation, each other, and the community from a place of love and caring.
- **RESPECT** - Be open and listen to each other as we explore conversations that are greater than all of us as individuals. Contribute to a respectful environment at all times.
- **HUMILITY** - Acknowledge that struggles are different for everyone; use your best judgment and approach each interaction with kindness.
- **COURAGE** - Acknowledge that not all conversations or interactions are easy and explore truths in an open space—it is expected that mistakes will be made.
- **WISDOM** - Be open to learning, listen to each other, and contribute your thoughts to help build collective wisdom and encourage growth from these experiences.
- **HONESTY** - Take the time to reflect on individual experiences together and honour the silence as people consider the questions asked.
- **TRUTH** - Approach what lies beneath the surface with an open mind—speak your truth with an open heart.

As we head into a new year with even more volatility and more unknowns, and as we shepherd the school toward its next 60 years with the important changes that lie ahead, these teachings will continue to offer guidance.

I have great faith in and appreciation for my colleagues at all levels of the school. We have been through incredible times and there is more to come, but we are still creative, still learning and still growing. And that is the most you can wish for from an institution of higher learning in the arts.

I thank Fred for his steadiness and Gideon for his unwavering support both of me and of this project in which we are all engaged. I look forward to meeting the next moment and to transforming the future through our artists and our art.

We have been through incredible times and there is more to come, but we are still creative, still learning and still growing. And that is the most you can wish for from an institution of higher learning in the arts.

— ALISA PALMER



The 2020 Graduating Class in the *Interprétation* program in show *CLAUDE GAUVREAU - L'asile de la pureté et quelques fragments*, texts by Claude Gauvreau, scripted by Alex Bergeron, and directed by Alice Ronfard; presented November 19 to 23, in the Monument-National's Ludger-Duvernay Theatre. Photo credit: Maxime Côté.



MESSAGES FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

— FRÉDÉRIC DUBOIS

Artistic Director, French Section

**A very strange year is coming
to an end.**

**And another, just as strange,
is about to begin.**

The precarious existence (and, paradoxically, the great adaptability) that artists in the theatre world are constantly faced with may prove to be an advantage in tackling these challenging times.

We teach our students to never take anything for granted, to walk the tightrope, to be in the present while acting, to take responsibility for what is put forth, to remain alert on the stage, to love their characters, to respect others who are on a different path than their own, and to not be afraid of the unknown, to even welcome it, and especially, to transform it into a resource. We instill in them that ready-made formulas can lead to confusion and that inner conflict is a navigable ocean.

On paper, all that sounds great.

In reality, the learning process is messy and unpredictable, and every day presents new challenges. I need only think of my colleagues and artists everywhere who saw their world turned upside down last spring, and it has continued to be a rocky road all this fall. The stages became quiet too early in the season, won't open up again until further down the road, and the next real theatrical rendezvous is still a long way off.

And yet we decided return to class.

We rolled up our sleeves. We truly wanted to be here. Right at the heart of what we do best: *teaching and learning*.

Or, as Alisa wisely said: We need to greet the moment as it comes.

And together, at the School, to remain open to others in all their complexity – with patience and generosity.

Even though we worked miracles in April to save the end of the term by going online, nothing can replace live interactions that are so essential to acting.

And, while it's true that the void created by the confinement is more easily filled when we on a mission to learn, we can't simply cram ourselves full with a 2-D virtual reality via those bright and not-so-intelligent screens. On the contrary, to counter the tedium, we need to be moving, to dig deeper.

We reopened the school in solidarity, in fact. One for all and all for one.

In the French section, we had a very full year. In addition to our usual courses and numerous creative projects and shows, several major initiatives are worth noting.

We have continued to open our doors to different communities and spheres. Again, last year, we performed in schools in and around Montreal as part of *Spectacle jeune public*. It is a kind of far-reaching conversation with our most precious of audiences, children. In addition, this project teaches our students to delve into all aspects of theatre and to set up a tour, a similar experience to what they might go through as they start their careers.

In that same spirit, under the guidance of Catherine Gadouas, the graduating students gave a Christmas concert in various CHSLDs.

Last year there was another 24-hour Creation Challenge within the walls of the Monument-National. This event provides an opportunity for our two sections to work together with a focus on spontaneity and creativity.

Collaborative efforts with other countries are falling into place, and we had the pleasure of receiving an instructor from the Conservatoire de Paris for an intensive movement course for 3rd and 4th year *Interprétation* students; we also welcomed students from the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts et Technique du Théâtre

We rolled up our sleeves. We truly wanted to be here. Right at the heart of what we do best: teaching and learning.

— FRÉDÉRIC DUBOIS



(ÉNSATT) in Lyon, an exchange that allowed two of our own students in the *Création et Production* program to attend this prestigious sister school with which educational exchanges are becoming well established.

The Independent Residencies program is now in its third year, and we were able to welcome an actress from Vancouver's francophone community. I seized on this opportunity to strengthen our ties with several actors in the Vancouver and Winnipeg communities with whom we believe we will be able to collaborate in the long term. The School continues to engage with Canadian artists throughout the land.

Our first Indigenous resident, Soleil Launière, completed her studies with a brilliant exit project that involved a 24-hour uninterrupted performance. She also took the time to teach 2nd and 3rd year *Interprétation* students, sharing with them her unique knowledge and know-how in voice, movement, and creation. The new residency program, which creates the space for a rich and constructive dialogue to take place, continues on with the arrival of Émilie Monnet.

I'd also like to draw attention to our first graduate of the redesigned *Mise en scène* program. His exit project got sidetracked by the pandemic, but he pulled through with great ingenuity to complete his show and, in so doing, demonstrated that all he had learned had served him well. Bravo J.J.

In conclusion (almost), let me remind you that we received some very prestigious guests throughout the school year: Jeannette Bertrand, Cathy Wong, Daria Colonna, Mike Payette, Yannick Nézet Séguin (via zoom), among others, came to our *mercredis de section* to talk about their experiences in their

respective fields and to inspire our students. I feel really proud of this achievement.

My real conclusion, though, is accompanied by a disappointed sigh for all the projects that we had to put on hold or abruptly terminate. I want to talk about them because they are what define us in where we are today and hope to be tomorrow:

- 2nd year students in the *Interprétation* program had, on their own initiative, organized a trip to Mexico to take courses at la *Escuela Nacional de Arte Teatral*. The school's administration had opened their doors to us after Alisa and I had visited them, and we all agreed that there would be enormous benefits in developing a "theatre without borders;"
- A creation project involving a selection of graduating students, again in partnership with Mexico, but also California (*CalArts*), that was to be presented at FTA 2020;
- We had also intended to go to the Maritimes to do some recruiting, an initiative led by Catherine La Frenière; as well, there is a contemporary opera that we were supposed to be working on, in collaboration with English section and Université de Montréal.

We hope to get these projects back on track as soon as life becomes a bit smoother again. Only time will tell when that will be, but I wanted to mention them to show that we spare no efforts in getting our work done and done well.

I would like to close by thanking my colleagues in both sections for the extraordinary work they do. I also wish to highlight the School staff's unwavering support. Most of all, hats off to the Zero Committee. And, of course, a big thank you to all the students.

Thank you.

PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS



COMMUNITY PROGRAMS



NTS shared its expertise and resources with a wide and diverse community of Canadians, thus helping to secure the important role that performing arts play in society

— GIDEON ARTHURS

Soleil Launière (Indigenous Artist in Residence 2020, Mashteuiatsh) explaining her final project called *Shevetam*; presented in LabLX, March 2019, as part of *Nuit Rouge*. Photo credit: Maxime Côté.

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— FISCAL YEAR 2019-2020

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Anthony Tattersfield

Jean-François Lacroix

We are pleased to welcome our new Board members during the Annual General Meeting on November 13, 2020.

NOTE FROM THE DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS OFFICE

— JEAN S. STUTSMAN

Director of Development and Alumni

Last year I described our many changes at NTS as a chrysalis metamorphosing to take wing in time for our 60th anniversary. Little did I know that 2020 would have murder hornets, meth crocodiles, bubonic plague squirrels and a novel little coronavirus waiting to upstage us, uproot us, and scatter us to the winds of change.

But we theatre people, just like those intrepid souls willing to support us philanthropically, are a resilient bunch. We figured out how to make art in isolation. We called on some true-blue donors who pulled out their wallets to do what they could despite their own uncertain futures. We brought our students to the finish line by reinventing our courses, revising our scripts, hearing our diverse communities, learning new technologies, and finding creative solutions with even more ideas to be tested in the coming school year. We are taking the opportunity to courageously explore new approaches, to challenge our traditional ways, to revise our plans on the fly and, most importantly, to continue acting, because that's what we do!

We have always embraced our role as change leaders in the theatre arts milieu, and in the current crisis that experience is serving us well. Part of our responsiveness includes an urgent requirement to reach out to new donors and strengthen our relationships with those who have helped us in the past. The students we are training today will be at the vanguard of reinvention, conceiving novel ways to bring the magic of live theatre to ever greater numbers of people. They will be storytelling in ways we cannot yet fathom. They deserve to be well trained and equipped to take up the torch.

As an arts organization, we have always been grateful for the financial support provided to us by our funders both public and private. In this stimulating time of profound upheaval our gratitude towards those willing to share their resources in service to creativity means everything to us. We honour you in the pages that follow.

We understand that many of you simply cannot help us financially at this time. We also know that you will be back stronger than ever as soon as you are able. So, I will close by thanking you for keeping us in your thoughts, and by wishing you health, energy and courage as we navigate this plague on all our houses.

Should you desire further information on how to donate funds or engage with the Alumni Network, please feel free to contact Jean S. Stutsman at 514-653-1759 or jeanstutsman@ent-nts.ca.

Espoir Segbeaya (Acting 2020, Nelson, BC) in a sketch from the *Monumental Occupation* show – a 24-hour Creation Challenge, presented on September 29, 2018 as part of Les Journées de la Culture. Photo credit: Adrián Morillo.



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4 Anonymous.....	Area of Greatest Need
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The late Louis Allen (Set & Costume Design 1983)	François Barbeau Bursary & Area of Greatest Need
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Photo :
Sadie Laflamme-Snow (Acting
2020, Ottawa, ON) and Ray Jacildo
(Acting 2020, Toronto, ON) in the
play *Burning Vision* and directed
by Mike Payette, presented from
December 9 to 14, 2019, in the
Monument-National's Ludger-
Duvernay Theatre. Photo credit:
Maxime Côté.

Cover page picture,
from left to right:
Marie-Madeleine Sarr (*Interpré-
tation* 2020, Montreal), Étienne
Laforge (*Interprétation* 2016,
Montreal), Héroïse Desrochers
(*Interprétation* 2020, Montreal)
and Loïc McIntyre (*Interprétation*
2020, Montreal) in *Ultime Saga*,
written by Tamara Nguyen (*Écriture
dramatique* 2019, Laval/Nogent-sur-
Marne), and directed by Sébastien
David (*Interprétation*, 2006);
presented February 26 to 29, 2020
in the Monument-National's Studio
Hydro-Québec.
Photo credit: Maxime Côté.

ANNUAL REPORT
2019 2020

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