

Scotiabank Partners with National Theatre School of Canada to Support Drama in Education and the Next Generation of Talent Nationwide

\$450,000 commitment to support expanded regional programming and much-needed resources for long-standing community arts festival, DramaFest

June 29, 2022

MONTREAL, Quebec – The National Theatre School of Canada (NTS) today announced a partnership with Scotiabank, beginning next year. The three-year funding commitment will support high school theatre programs across Canada by strengthening the historic DramaFest program, offering more students and teachers from different communities a way to connect through the arts, share their stories, and tap into the power of drama in education.

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The upcoming season will be the first time since 2019 that the youth performing arts festival will take place in-person with live audiences, after adjusting to pandemic measures. Through this partnership, NTS hopes to expand its DramaFest program both regionally and nationally, resulting in a total of 300 participating schools nationwide, nearly 400 total productions, and 100 nights of unique and impactful performances.

Since 1946, DramaFest has been a celebration of theatre, acting as a vehicle for young people to learn to lead, exercise empathy, listen, find community, and showcase their creativity in a safe and nurturing environment. From humble beginnings in Ontario, DramaFest has expanded significantly over the years, and now convenes students across Canada — including Alberta, B.C., Ontario, and the Atlantic — in celebrating performing arts and performing arts education. The impact of the program has been significant. In the 2018-2019 season (pre-pandemic), 7,500 students across hundreds of schools took part in the program, resulting in a wide array of dynamic and thoughtful performances. Since its inception, the festival has also played a role in launching the careers of numerous notable artists and leaders in the field.

Designed to stimulate teamwork and problem solving, DramaFest encourages young people to explore self-expression and have conversations about the complexities of the world around them. The students celebrate each other’s ideas and, even if they don’t pursue a career in performing arts, each walks away with lasting leanings and friendships.

“With so much going on in the world today, and the level at which young people are engaged, having a program like DramaFest in schools across Canada is indispensable to education and growth. The festival allows students to bring their individual experiences and thoughts to the classroom — often tackling important and complex issues — and explore it through the arts,” said Maude Levasseur, Director of Arts Engagement at the National Theatre School of Canada. “There’s no question these students, and their teachers, have the power to make a change through DramaFest, so we couldn’t be happier that Scotiabank sees our vision and the value in growing the festival’s reach.”

“We’re proud to partner with the National Theatre School of Canada,” says Genevieve Brouillard, Regional Senior Vice President, Quebec and Eastern Ontario, at Scotiabank. “The value we’ve seen the DramaFest program provide to Canadian youth has greatly benefited their creative expression, and we cannot wait to see how our partnership will help to build on that.”

The growth and expansion of DramaFest will support National Theatre School’s unwavering mission to continue making theatre accessible in a diverse and equitable environment for students, teachers and volunteers for years to come. The National Theatre School is proud to be a leader in providing inclusive and diverse arts education in both the Canadian school system and the theatre community at-large. The school is proud to be a prime example of how arts and culture in Canada has persevered and overcome the challenges dealt by the pandemic, and DramaFest is a clear bridge to a strong and creative future.

About the National Theatre School of Canada

Founded in 1960, the National Theatre School of Canada (NTS) is recognized as a leading institution for anyone wishing to pursue a career as a playwright, director, actor, set and costume designer, or production professional, and offers incomparable training for artists of all kinds. The NTS is unique: It offers incomparable, high-level training for artists of all kinds in all aspects of the theatre arts, in both French and English. Many of its 2,000 graduates are among Canada’s most active and versatile artists and designers, and the School’s influence is felt from coast to coast and across the world. For more information visit: <https://ent-nts.ca/en>

About National Theatre School’s DramaFest

The National Theatre School’s DramaFest program showcases secondary school theatre productions in their respective provinces and convenes thousands of drama students to perform and share their talents and passion in a friendly atmosphere. Formerly known as the Sears Drama Festival, and founded in Ontario in 1946 by the late Ken Watts, it is Canada’s oldest theatre festival. The theatre festival started out with just three plays, and now has over 350 annual entries spotlighting spectacular performances and productions — including the addition of festival offshoots in British Columbia (2009) and the Atlantic provinces (2011). For more information visit: <https://ent-nts.ca/en/nts-dramafest>

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