Hello friends,

Welcome to the Lyric Stage Company of Boston’s Annual Report for the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

We closed our season at a time of historic uncertainty and crisis. Inspite of this reality, we want to both celebrate some important milestones and look excitedly to the future, which promises change, if nothing else.

Our 45th theatrical season not only opened with a bang, it also opened with the maw of a man-eating plant. Our revival of Little Shop of Horrors was beloved by audiences, and earned Katrina Z Pavao an Elliot Norton Award for her outstanding performance as Audrey.

In ordinary times, the headline of the year might have been the announcement of Producing Artistic Director Spiro Veloudos’s retirement. During Spiro’s 22-year tenure, he won just about every theatre award you can think of, including the StageSource Theatre Hero Award, the Elliot Norton Award for Sustained Excellence, and he was named Best Artistic Director by Boston Magazine. The eye-popping production of Agatha Christie’s Murder on the Orient Express that Spiro helmed won’t be his last, even if his production of A Gentleman’s Guide to Love & Murder has been postponed.

As we made the transition to a third generation of leadership, the Board of Directors adopted an Executive Director model. We are deeply gratified that Matt Chapuran accepted our offer to serve as our first Executive Director effective last October. By training and experience, Matt brings extensive administrative and artistic qualifications to our organization at a time of increasing complexity. In January, Matt promoted Courtney O’Connor to the position of Artistic Director. Courtney joined the full-time staff in the summer of 2018, following a freelance directing career that included Lyric Stage productions of The Life and Times of Nicholas Nickleby (co-directed with Spiro Veloudos), Red Hot Patriot, Stones in His Pockets, and more.

We have in place a formidable leadership team. Matt and Courtney’s relentless creativity, sensitivity, and flexibility in confronting the challenges presented by the pandemic have been exemplary. On behalf of the Board, I commend their dedication.

Courtney’s first show as Artistic Director was The Cake, a prescient play about gay marriage but more importantly, about how to humanely dissent with those we love. In many ways, it served as a companion piece to The Thanksgiving Play, one of the first shows that Courtney brought to the Lyric Stage as Associate Artistic Director, and the first professional production of the work of a Native American playwright in the Boston area.
This award-winning sci-fi pulp musical tells the tale of nebbishy Seymour who haplessly pines after his coworker Audrey. Suddenly, opportunity falls into his lap in the form of a mysterious, carnivorous, conniving — not to mention singing — plant that promises to fulfill Seymour’s every wish.

“Director Bertone does a marvelous job with the choreography in the Lyric’s intimate space... But it’s the way that she allows her actors to find subtle comic touches in the work that really elevates this outstanding production.” – The Theater Mirror

Top: Remo Airaldi, Katrina Z Pavao, Dan Prior, Yewande Odetoyinbo/Tim Hoover (Audrey II); inset: Pier Lamia Porter, Carla Martinez, Lovely Hoffman; photos by Mark S. Howard.
In one of her first acts as Artistic Director, Courtney announced a 2020-2021 theatrical season that would showcase all women directors, a movement towards parity that is reflected in the leadership of the Lyric Stage Board, its senior staff, and the design teams that realize our shared artistic vision. Even though the coronavirus is necessitating changes to the season, this commitment won’t be lost.

Two of the key partnerships that we look forward to reviving when we reopen are with the Boston Children’s Museum and the Front Porch Arts Collective. These have been times of collective trauma, and Boston’s Black residents and its youth have felt a disproportionate strain. We believe in the power of live theatre to collectively heal our wounds as a community, and look forward to building an organization that is anti-racist, and that thoughtfully builds young and new audiences.

We also want to get back to class. In the first full year since our merger with City Stage, we had teaching artists in four Boston Public schools, working with teachers in 37 classrooms, and reaching almost 800 students. Work was ready to begin at a fifth school this spring when the school year was disrupted by the coronavirus.

These last few months have helped us to recognize more strongly than ever our need for connection. Founded in 1974, the Lyric Stage is Boston’s oldest resident theatre company, which means we know what it means to be a part of the Boston community. We will adapt to the changes in front of us by identifying new opportunities to stay connected and to do our part in the community without losing sight of our commitment to producing excellent, live theatre.

As we end our season, we want to say thank you to Jo-An Heileman, who closes out two terms as Board President. Her leadership has seen crisis and transition, and she has responded with grace and calm. When we reopen, we look to expand our Board of Directors and our Advisory Council and hope you will reach out to learn more if you have candidates in mind that want to help us plan for the future.

Our Board’s generosity, augmented by many unsolicited gifts from our loyal audience, has put us in the position where even this interrupted season will finish with positive cash flow. With cash reserves and an innovative approach to producing live theatre even amidst a pandemic, we look forward to sharing stories in your theatrical home once again.

Thank you for being a part of the Lyric Stage family.

Warmly,

Ron Sudol | President of the Board of Directors
Lyric Stage Company of Boston
In this new comedy, a mismatched quartet of earnest aspiring actors and misguided teachers attempt to create an elementary school play that is culturally sensitive to both the traditional Thanksgiving feast and Native American Heritage Month, all without any Native Americans in the cast. Playwright Larissa FastHorse’s fierce and savvy attack on skin-deep political correctness leaves you gasping, and laughing, and thinking long after the 90-minute play is over.

“My wife and I loved every single minute and the people around us were just howling with laughter and recognition also.”
— Joan Hazard | Audience Member

“Perceptive, quirky, and laugh-out-loud funny, Edmiston’s production is just right, from the gloriously delirious performances down to the Janie Howland’s set and Rachel Padula-Shufelt’s costumes. Ranks among the best of the year!” — The Theater Mirror
MATT: I want to thank you for welcoming me back to the Lyric Stage last October. I’ve been asked if I have any mixed feelings about the timing of my return, and honestly the answer is no. If I felt welcome in the fall, the outpouring of support we all felt from you in the spring as we had to reluctantly close our doors was a reminder of how many people truly consider the Lyric Stage to be their theatrical home.

During our period of quarantine, we were able to secure proceeds from the Payroll Protection Program (PPP) and proceeds from an insurance claim that helped stabilize our finances. At the same time, a significant number of donors increased or accelerated their giving. For every guest who asked for a refund for a cancelled performance, ten more offered to donate the value of their tickets. As you’ll see from our balance sheet, we enter the fall with some fiscal strength.

COURTNEY: I sit here in my living room writing this at the end of July. Normally the first set would be being loaded into the theatre. Costumes would be being fitted and adjusted. I would already be scouting titles for my second season as artistic director. And the flame of excitement would be burning bright in anticipation of the first rehearsal of the new season will be, but that’s ok: the flame of excitement is no less powerful for having to wait.

I may not know with certainty when the first rehearsal of the new season will be, but that’s ok: the flame of excitement is no less powerful for having to wait.

I believe one of the skills that is less recognized in theatre artists is our ability to adapt. A piano breaks onstage? Someone holds it up while finishing the scene. Entire shows...
AGATHA CHRISTIE’S MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS

ADAPTED BY KEN LUDWIG

DIRECTED BY SPIRO VELOUDOS

Just after midnight, a snow storm stops the luxurious Orient Express in its tracks. The train is filled with eccentric passengers, suddenly minus one — an American tycoon lies dead in his compartment, his door locked from the inside. With a car full of suspects — each with an alibi — it’s the perfect mystery for none other than famed detective Hercule Poirot, n’est-ce pas?

“We went for the first time to see Murder on the Orient Express, and enjoyed the entire experience. What a lovely little gem of a theater! We shall definitely return.”

– George & Rainelle Tomlinson | Audience Members

“Veloudos has an ensemble of many stars who form a sparkly constellation in service of the production! Get your ticket punched for a ride on the Orient Express!” – Broadway World

Top: Remo Airaldi, Davron S. Monroe, Kerry A. Dowling, Scot Colford; inset: Remo Airaldi, Will McGarraham; photos by Mark S. Howard.
MATT, continued

Many of you have joined Courtney and me for our regular Wednesday night Zoom chats and know the detail and care with which we have approached reopening. We are excited to bring live theatre back to Boston, when permitted.

Obviously, this is a big if, one that relies upon the partnerships of our various artistic unions, a stamp of approval from the Governor’s Reopening Committee, and the continued progress our region has seen in reining in the epidemic.

But make no mistake, we shall return in some fashion. We’ll perform for small crowds. We’ll stream what we can. We’ll customize outdoor walking tours and podcasts that will keep the theatrical community knit and open new avenues for connection.

Our pleasure comes from seeing you, the artists and audiences that comprise the true strength of Lyric Stage. We know you haven’t gone away. We won’t either.

Very truly yours,

Courtenay O’Connor  |  Artistic Director
Lyric Stage Company of Boston

FOR EVERY GUEST WHO ASKED FOR A REFUND … TEN MORE OFFERED TO DONATE THE VALUE OF THEIR TICKETS. AS YOU’LL SEE FROM OUR BALANCE SHEET, WE ENTER THE FALL WITH SOME FINANCIAL STRENGTH.

COURTNEY, continued

have been redesigned and redirected in the last few days before they opened because everything that seemed like it would work did not. And we strive not to lose sight of the goal: to understand our humanity on a deeper level through the sharing of story.

And so we move forward having made our adjustments for the season ahead, (knowing full well we are not done with changes yet) ones that will allow us to be more nimble and flexible. The stories we will share this year, though smaller in scope and number of people on the stage, will explore what we have gained from what we have lost. They will be filled with love and grief and joy and pain and courage. They will speak to the moment we are in without being about the moment itself.

I may not know with certainty when the first rehearsal of the new season will be, but that’s ok: the flame of excitement is no less powerful for having to wait. Much like the ghost light which keeps our stage from being completely dark, this flame is burning brightly, steadfastly, and strongly.

All my best,

Matt Chapuran  |  Executive Director
Lyric Stage Company of Boston
THE CAKE

BY
BEKAH BRUNSTETTER

DIRECTED BY
COURTNEY O’CONNOR

Conflict collides with confection when Della, a traditional Southern baker, reunites with her deceased best friend’s daughter, Jen, in preparation for Jen’s wedding. Della is forced to question her strongly-held beliefs when she is asked to bake Jen’s dream wedding cake for her and her future wife. Questions of morals, judgment, and family swirl around them all in this heartfelt and deliciously funny new play.

“With two powerhouse performances at its core, The Cake is elevated to something exceedingly special and totally unmissable... a thousand quiet moments that add up to one of the most affecting [performances] I’ve seen all year.” – DigBoston

“The Cake was spectacular... when I was walking back to the train, I had to stop so I could let the tears run down! It was funny, sad, and the acting was great. I loved it!!” – Cyn Donnelly | Audience Member
### REVENUE & SUPPORT

**Revenue**
- Production Revenue: $1,084,251
- City Stage/Education Revenue: $69,920

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<td>Production Revenue</td>
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<td>City Stage/Education Revenue</td>
<td>$69,920</td>
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**Support**
- Contributions: $748,803
- Government Grants: $24,700
- Rental Income: $38,269
- Restoration/Facilities Fees: $35,914
- Interest income: $984

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### EXPENSES

**Production**
- Production expenses: $580,083
- Marketing: $157,154

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**Management & General**
- Salaries: $629,362
- General: $176,896
- Occupancy: $275,925
- Development/Fundraising: $14,388
- Misc.: $16,698
- CityStage/Education: $83,626

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2020 FINANCIALS: 7/1/2019 - 6/30/2020

**REVENUE & SUPPORT**
- Production Revenue
- CityStage/Education Revenue
- Contributions
- Government Grants
- Rental Income
- Restoration/Facilities Fees

**TOTAL REVENUE & SUPPORT** $2,002,841

**EXPENSES**
- Production expenses
- Marketing
- Salaries
- General
- Occupancy
- Development/Fundraising
- Misc.
- CityStage/Education

**TOTAL EXPENSES** $1,934,132

**BUDGET: PROJECTED SURPLUS** $68,709
STAFF

Administration
Matt Chapuran | Executive Director
Courtney O’Connor | Artistic Director
Spiro Veloudos | Producing Artistic Director Emeritus
Kate Casner | Digital Marketing Associate
Nora Conley | General Manager
Aja M. Jackson | Interim Production Manager
René Morrissette | Development Manager
Chandra Pieragostini | Associate Director of Education
Michele Proude | Kidstage Manager

Box Office & Front of House
Kat O’Connor | Box Office Manager
Katherine Shaver | Assistant Box Office Manager
Olivia Eggers, David Kaus, Sara Kenney,
Torí Loubert, Jamie Semel, Katherine Shaver | Box Office & Front of House Managers
Anamaria Alarcón, Sarah Bord, Alyssa Lara,
Maeve Power, Laurny Reid, Linda Shewokis,
Allison Valton | Box Office & Front of House Assistants

Administrative Assistants
Daisy Brackett, Emma Goldman | Artistic Associates
Marieska Luzada, Michael Rocco | Digital Marketing & Social Media Associates
Reggie Osirus, Kelly Sou, Ava Straccia,
Julia Thorn | Digital Media Associates
Kandyce Whittingham | Management Associates
Tuck Wunderle | Production Assistants

Stage Managers 2019-2020 Season
Athena-Gwendolyn Baptiste | Betsy Pierce
Robin Grady* | Nerys Powell*
Rose Mancuso | Angela Harrington
Diane McLean* | L. Arkansas Light*

*Denotes Member Of Actors’ Equity Association
A disengaged son is forced to rein in his mother’s joyful overspending as she drifts away in her later years. Ida Armstrong is broke, lonely, and fading fast. As she cheerfully spends all of her children’s money, her son is forced to assume the unwanted role of The Treasurer: an arrangement that becomes untenable the more he questions his devotion to her. This darkly funny, sharply intimate new work chronicles the strained ties between a son and his aging mother, and the weight of a guilty conscience.

“The Lyric Stage presents an all too familiar issue in an totally original way thanks to a perfect blend of script and direction, with performances executed equally as well.” – MTRMag
EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH
From the Teen Neighborhood Theatre during founders Ron & Polly’s era, to Lyric First Stage during Spiro Veloudos’ tenure, theater-based education has been a core part of Lyric Stage’s mission. In 2019, The Lyric Stage merged with City Stage Company and now reaches tens of thousands of students and families. This year our City Stage educators worked with 795 students in 37 classrooms scattered between four different Boston elementary schools. And in the Boston Children’s Museum, our KidStage artists involved 44,800 children and families in almost 390 performances.

COMMUNITY INITIATIVE
The Lyric Stage is happy to be a participating member of The Huntington Community Membership Initiative. The program is designed to reduce the cost barrier of attending live theatre for those with limited income and to diversify the audiences so they look more like the city of Boston.

Over the past year Lyric Stage has provided hundreds of tickets, welcoming a diverse and enthusiastic community of theater lovers, and enabling our neighbors to enjoy award winning productions.

Additionally, the Lyric Stage is a member of the Massachusetts Cultural Council’s EBT Card to Culture program, providing a deep discount to EBT cardholders. Last year through these and other special programs, Lyric Stage provided over 1,000 tickets to our productions.

“My First Grade Students can explore their creativity without being frustrated or having fear of failure, it can reinforce different ways to enhance learning through fun with City Stage to support all learners from different backgrounds.”
– Lea Jones | Tynan Elementary School
Thanks for putting art in the heart of the community

Bank of America recognizes the Lyric Stage Company of Boston for its success in bringing the arts to performers and audiences throughout the community. We commend you on creating an opportunity for all to enjoy and share a cultural experience.

Visit us at bankofamerica.com/massachusetts.