

# Carousel Players

... THEATRE YOU NEVER OUTGROW ...

— \* —  
2017-2018  
SEASON

## ANNUAL REPORT

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# 2017/18 Moments of Note

**A World Premiere Production:** Jordi Mand's *This Will Be Excellent* debuted in February 2018 after several years in our new play development program.

**A Canadian Premiere:** *Hare & Tortoise*, by award-winning British playwright Brendan Murray, toured across Niagara and Hamilton to school and family audiences.

**A Niagara first – theatre for babies!** Carousel Players presented the magical *One Thing Leads to Another* for audiences aged 3-12 months (and their adults) in partnership with Young People's Theatre of Toronto.

**We said farewell** to Artistic Director Jessica Carmichael after three years with Carousel Players, and wish her all the best at her new post at Concordia University.

**We welcomed our new Artistic Director,** Monica Dufault, formerly Artistic Director of Essential Collective Theatre, who has been an actor, educator, and playwright with Carousel Players.

**Our first annual Community Picnic!** A chance to celebrate Carousel with the community at Lakeside Park, where our namesake still stands.

**The generosity of our supporters** at the Carousel Caravan allowed us to offer 10 free performances to schools with limited resources and hold new play development workshops.

We were joined by two new sponsors for our education and outreach programs: Ontario Teachers' Insurance Plan and M.K. Rittenhouse & Sons

Our Artistic Director and General Manager attended an historic assembly of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres which offered provocative ideas about changing practices in Canadian Theatre.

Though Carousel Players had a challenging season full of change, the year ended with a surplus of 0.05%

## About Carousel Players

Carousel Players is an award-winning professional theatre for young audiences committed to the development of new work and the production of theatre that entertains and challenges our audiences. We present inspiring and creative plays for children in schools, theatres, and other venues.

Carousel Players was founded in 1972 by the late Desmond Davis, a Professor of Drama at Brock University in St. Catharines. Carousel has had six other Artistic Directors since its inception: Duncan McGregor, Pierre Tetrault, Kim Selody, Pablo Felices-Luna, Jessica Carmichael, and Monica Dufault.

Carousel Players ensures that our performances, summer theatre camps and classroom programs are affordable for all children regardless of their socioeconomic status or situation. We believe live theatre develops artistic awareness, learning skills and a sense of well-being in children.

# This Will Be Excellent

This world premiere of a new script by Jordi Mand played from February 5 through February 24, 2018 for grades 4-8. The production was directed by Erin Brubaker and designed by Anahita Dehbonehie, and featured performances by Nicole Joy-Fraser, Maddie Bautista, Theo Gallaro, and Diana Reyes (aka DJ Fly Lady Di).

The play focused on middle school friends Daniel and Izzy. Both are struggling at school, and are given a challenge by their principal to find a project where they can show leadership. They hatch a wild plan to bring their favourite rapper, Arrow, to their school to receive an award and give a concert. Together the two friends organize the entire event, using math skills they didn't know they had. When their famous guest cancels at the last minute, Daniel and Izzy have to deal with some real disappointment. However, they pick themselves up, and begin to dream up a new project together.

With music by DJ Fly Lady Di, the show played at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre and in schools throughout the Niagara region. The final show at AN Meyer Secondary School in Niagara Falls was a free public performance in memory of past board chair Debra McLaughlan.



# Hare & Tortoise

From April 5 through April 29, 2018, Carousel Players presented *Hare & Tortoise* by UK playwright Brendan Murray. This delightful retelling of the Aesop fable was the first show directed by Carousel's new Artistic Director, Monica Dufault, and featured whimsical set and costume designs by Kelly Wolf. The performers, Kurtis Leon Baker as Hare, and Kaleigh Gorka as Tortoise, embodied the two characters with energy, humour and heart, bringing the story to life beautifully for audiences in JK to Grade 3.

The play focuses on two friends who have opposite approaches to just about everything, yet who still care for each other through the changing seasons. Original music by local composer Joe Lapinski added a fun, folksy feel to this production. Children responded very enthusiastically to this show, singing and dancing along at times, and counting down the clock as Hare tried hard to wait for the race to finally begin. Along with school shows, this piece was presented in public performances at the St. Catharines PAC, in Grimsby, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Niagara Falls, and at the In the Soil Festival.

PHOTO CREDITS: THEO GALLARO, MADDIE BAUTISTA, DIANA REYES IN THIS WILL BE EXCELLENT; KALEIGH GORKA, KURTIS LEON BAKER IN HARE & TORTOISE. ALL PHOTOS BY LAUREN GARBUTT

# New Play Development

Nurturing the development of new work is a core part of our work. We believe in theatrical experiences that are intelligent, heartfelt, topical, and grounded in respect for our audiences. Carousel Players supports the work Canadian playwrights to develop new plays that will become part of the national and international body of work for young audiences. Our 2018/19 new play development focussed on three works: Falen Johnson's *Rez Road* (working title), *Virginia Wolf*, adapted for the stage by Cole Lewis & Clelia Scala from the book by Kyo Maclear & Isabelle Arsenault (Kids Can Press), and Sean Dixon's *Whole World*.

Falen Johnson's play shares the stories of two sisters growing up on Six Nations, and is based in her own childhood experiences. It was commissioned and workshopped for a presentation at the *Celebration of Nations* at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre in September 2017. *Whole World* by Sean Dixon was workshopped twice in 2018. The play tells the story of Omar, a young refugee from Syria, as he struggles to make himself understood in a new language, while at the same time a group of his fellow students struggle to understand Omar at all. *Whole World* will have its premiere production in Carousel's 2018/19 Season.

## Outreach & Education

### Summer Theatre School

Summer Theatre School 2017 saw 62 campers attend 5 camps at The Robby at the Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre. Thanks to a \$1,000 grant from the Niagara Community Foundation's Summer Camp Fund, 8 Niagara area students received full camp scholarships.



### In-Classroom Education

Through our work with students in Brock University's Department of Teacher Education, Carousel Players developed study guides for teachers with activities linked to both of our school tour productions. A faculty member from this program also developed the Playlinks program workshops.

The Playlinks program provides drama education activities and creative context for the productions that the students would be seeing and had seen. These workshops are always provided free of charge to the schools. Thanks to a new sponsorship from the Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan, we brought Playlinks to nine schools, offering 88 workshops to more than 1,300 students.

### Norah Morgan Award

The 2018 Norah Morgan Award recipient was Teresa Ricciuti of Steele Street Public School in Port Colborne. Steele Street Principal Mark Piazza spoke highly of Ms. Ricciuti, recognizing her ability to incorporate the arts into her daily teaching in way that "not only excites [Teresa] and allows her creative flair to shine, but engages all the students at different levels, making it fun for them to learn."

### Mentorship

Carousel believes strongly that as members of the Niagara community, we have a responsibility to support provide resources, advice, and knowledge to those who ask. One of the most exciting ways we put this into action is through internships: co-op students Emily and Arthur (Laura Secord Secondary School), communications intern Sara McIntyre (Brock University) and public relations intern Dana Graffi (Niagara College).

# Staff & Board

The 2017/18 Season began with a new General Manager for Carousel Players. Kate Leathers stepped into the role at the start of the year, after two years as Carousel's Production Manager. Before joining Carousel Players, Kate had worked for two decades as an arts manager and a technician in theatres across Canada. She holds a BA in Drama from Bishops University and an MBA from McMaster University.

Carousel Players' new production manager David Costello joined the company in August 2017. A Production Manager and Technical Director originally from Toronto, David discovered his love of working backstage when he worked with Players' Theatre at McGill University. A graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada, David has worked with companies like Outside the March, Against the Grain Theatre, Soulpepper, and SummerWorks Performance Festival.

In mid 2017/18, Carousel Players said goodbye to outgoing Artistic Director Jessica Carmichael and welcomed new Artistic Director Monica Dufault. We also bid farewell to long time Board Member Paddy Parr.

Jessica Carmichael is a mixed non-status Abenaki/Euro director, dramaturge, playwright, actor and educator. Jessica trained at the National Theatre School of Canada, the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art & King's College London, the University of Alberta and the Michael Langham Workshop for Classical Direction. She is a past artistic associate with Native Earth Performing Arts in Toronto and was Program Director of their Playwrights Unit Animiikiig. She was a workshop leader for "The Study" hosted by the National Arts Centre, Indigenous Performing Arts Alliance and Debajehmujig Creation Centre.



During her time with Carousel Players, Jessica directed four productions – *Spelling 2-5-5*, *Hana Hashimoto*, *Sixth Violin*, *Tick*, and *Boys, Girls, and Other Mythological Creatures* – and numerous new play development workshops. She adapted Chieri Uegaki and Qin Leng's book *Hana Hashimoto, Sixth Violin* (Kids Can Press) for the stage, which premiered at Carousel Players in 2016.



Monica Dufault has been an active member of the Niagara arts community for more than twenty years. As an actor, she performed at theatres across the country, including The Shaw Festival, Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre, Theatre Aquarius, and the National Arts Centre. At Carousel Players, Monica is remembered for her performances in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *The Hobbit*, *Silverwing*, *Where the Wild Things Are*, and *Saving Lonesome George*. Her play for young audiences, *Peg and the Yeti*, has been produced by Carousel Players, Manitoba Theatre for Young People, and several other Canadian companies. She began her directing career in 2006 as Assistant Director on Carousel Players' production of *Wimp*, directed by Kim Selody.

In 2014, Monica became the Artistic Director of Essential Collective Theatre, where she directed *The Valley*, *Wings of Wax*, *Falling: A Wake*, *L'Lapse*, *The Fighting Days*, *The Drawer Boy*, *The Welland Canal Play* and the popular *Senior Stories* program, and guided the company's new play development activities. Monica is also an experienced arts educator, teaching acting and scriptwriting in Brock University's Department of Dramatic Arts, delivering drama workshops in Niagara area elementary and secondary schools, and teaching drama classes, drama camps, and Playlinks for Carousel Players.

Monica Dufault holds a BA in Theatre from the University of Winnipeg, an MA in Studies in Comparative Literatures and Arts from Brock University, and is a graduate of the English Acting program at the National Theatre of School of Canada.

# Carousel in the Community

Carousel's role in Niagara is not limited to the artistic and outreach activities we do. In 2017/18, Carousel Players participated in Culture Days with a drop-in drama games workshop, offered a PD Day camp in October, and brought a unique theatre for infants tour to Niagara. We also held our annual Caravan fundraiser in October and the inaugural Community Picnic in May.



## One Thing Leads to Another

In March, 2018, Carousel Players brought in Young People's Theatre's performance for babies, *One Thing Leads to Another*. This tour, which reached six Niagara communities, was a successful show from the perspective of the audience enjoyment of the experience and was a good first step towards building a network for community touring. Reaching parents and children in their home towns was a special experience for the audience and for us.

## Carousel Caravan

The 2017 Caravan was held on October 26, and included readings from our new play development program, the Norah Morgan Award, the announcement of the incoming Artistic Director, and a farewell celebration for outgoing Artistic Director Jessica Carmichael. The event raised more than \$12,000 to support new play development and provide free performances to schools with limited resources.



## Carousel Players Community Picnic

In May 2018, Carousel Players visited the carousel our name comes from for the first annual Community Picnic. This event, featured musical performances, crafts, and games. Response was very positive from families who attended and we gave away 77 free carousel rides. The picnic served to raise public awareness and good will for the company, to link us back to the historic carousel for which the company is named, and to provide a free event to enhance community engagement. We plan to continue with this event in the coming years.



PHOTO CREDITS: CARAVAN GUESTS BY LAUREN GARBUTT; COMMUNITY PICNIC PARTICIPANTS, BARBARA CROALL & NICOLE JOY-FRASER BY COURTNEY PETERS

# 2017/18 By The Numbers

## performances & public readings

**40 school shows**  
**22 public shows & readings**  
**12 communities visited**

Burlington, Fonthill, Fort Erie,  
 Grimsby, Hamilton, Niagara Falls,  
 Niagara-on-the-Lake, Pelham, Port Colborne,  
 St Catharines, Thorold, Welland

**14,660 audience members**

### 2017/18 Carousel Board Members

Sande Farrauto, Sarah Lynch, Carolyn  
 Mackenzie, Corey Miles, Paddy Parr, Dave  
 Thomas, Jenniffer Anand, Keith Tait

### 2017/18 Carousel staff

Artistic Director (July-Dec): Jessica Carmichael  
 Artistic Director (Jan-June): Monica Dufault  
 General Manager: Kate Leathers  
 Outreach & Marketing Manager: Lauren Hundert  
 Production Manager: David Costello

**52 artists**

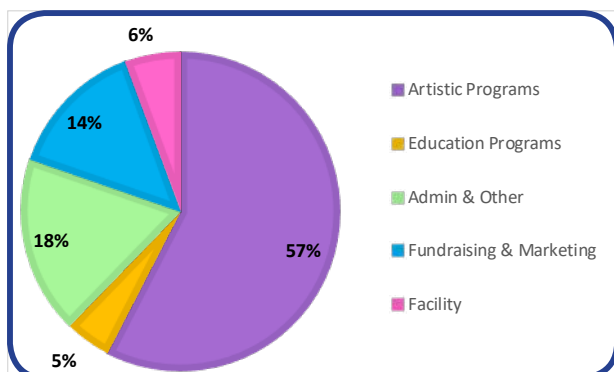
**18 craftspeople**

**Who else was part of  
 Carousel's team in 2017/18?**

**10 arts educators**

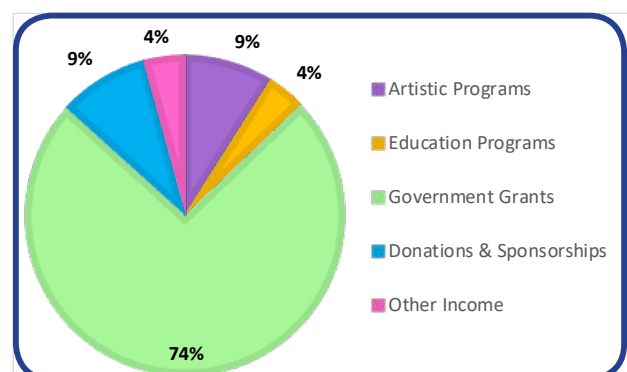
**16 volunteers**

### 2017/18 Operating Expenses \$397,980



**Complete Audited Financial  
 Statements Available on Request**

### 2017/18 Operating Revenue: \$399,597



# CAROUSEL'S WORK IS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF OUR FUNDERS, SPONSORS, AND DONORS.

## 2017 Caravan Silent Auction Donors

Barb Gailbraith, Barbara Blain, Beatties Basics, Bird Kingdom, Bistro Mirepoix, Blyth Festival, Boston Pizza, Bugsy's Pour House, Butler's Bar & Grill, Canadian National Exhibition, Carolyn Mackenzie, Cat's Caboose, Chorus Niagara, Connie Paul, Cows Niagara, Dawn Bergmann, Delta London Armouries Hotel, Department of Dramatic Arts, Marilyn I Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts, Drayton Entertainment, Essential Collective Theatre, FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, Foster Festival, Garden City Essentials, Ginger's Restaurant, Glenn McCann, Great Canadian Theatre Company, Greaves Jams & Marmalades, Grey Borders Press, Gryphon Ridge Highlands, Honey's Fashions, Huggaloops, Irish Design, Jean Rumney, Just Christmas, Kate Baggot, Kath Stewart, Kathy McBride, Kelsey's Original Roadhouse, Lancaster Brooks & Welch, Leslie Frankish, Little Divas n Dudes, Mac Hillier, Mastermind, Meridian Centre, Music Niagara, Niagara IceDogs, Niagara Parks Commission, Niagara River Lions, Niagara Symphony, Niagara Wine Festival, Old Winery Restaurant, Optimal Wellness Niagara, Oscar & Sophia, Picard's Peanuts, Rebecca Baechler, Renaissance Salon, Rodman Hall Art Centre, Safari Niagara, Sande Farrauto, Sandtrap Pub & Grill, Sarah Lynch, Shannon Passero, Shaw Festival, Showboat Festival Theatre, St. Catharines Downtown Association, Stratford Festival, Suitcase in Point, Tarragon Theatre, The Boot Shop, The Grand Theatre, The Olde Angel Inn, The Upper Deck, Two Broke Knitters, Wellington Court, White Oaks, Willow Den, Yellow Door Theatre Project, Young People's Theatre

## Our Individual Donors in 2017/18 – Many Thanks!

Garry & Barbara Blain, William Burns, Susan Hunt, Irmgard Penner, Mabel Moss, Shirley Plitnikas, Nigel Scott & Gyllian Raby, Polly & Ron Ritchell, Mary Jane Sferrazza, June & Doug Gibbs, Nicole Henderson Professional Corporation, Jerome Black, Wynne Nicholson, Rebecca Cann, Jayne & Rick Evans, Lois Murray, B.J. Armstrong, Tom & Sharon Laviolette, Susan Olson, Joe Norris, Arlene Copland, Bea Taylor, Jeff Cummings, Judi Doyle, Martin Doyle, Jerome Black, Sarah Lynch, Sharon Keller, Irmgard Penner, Liz Palmieri, Donna Tredway, David Thomas, Shelia Hosking, Tina Yeung, Sarah Lynch, David & Sheryl Pearson

## Debra McLauchlan Memorial Fund Donors

William Burns, Susan Hunt, Donna Tredway, Rosamund Battye, Paddy Parr, Rodger Beatty, J.B. Yarmola, Teresa Ricciuti, Sybil Wilson

## Carousel's 2017/18 Season was Supported by



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