



Quebec Drama Federation

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2010-11

It's now been a year since I was entrusted with the presidency of the Quebec Drama Federation. As many of you may know, I am stepping down as President in order to make room for my first child, who is due at the end of October. So I'd like to reflect, not only on the last year, but on the years since I came onto the board of the QDF.

In 2007, to be honest, the QDF was a mystery to me. I didn't know what it did, what it stood for, or who was even a member. Attending the Conseil québécois de théâtre's États-Généraux, I found myself one of the few anglophones there at all, and possibly the only anglophone under 40. I joined the board of the QDF that fall asking myself what I could do to improve the situation.

I can say confidently that the QDF in 2011 has made great strides.

We have created a 21st-century Web presence, thanks to our new quebecdrama.org website, frequent email updates, and Facebook activity. I renewed my membership online in under 30 seconds.

We are an integral part of the English-language arts community in general, through our membership in ELAN, the English-Language Arts Network. Most recently, our members helped envision and create the State of the Arts Summit, which brought together artists from across Quebec in an open forum to discuss the issues that we were most passionate about and to propose projects which show enormous potential.

We are an increasingly important partner to the Conseil québécois de théâtre. As a member of the *Comité de l'animation du milieu*, I have been helping the CQT connect to QDF members. We have made sure that the last two World Theatre Day messages have been translated into English, including last year's amazing video of Olivier Kemeid's message. We conducted a survey of all of Quebec theatre this season, including anglophone theatre artists, and are using this information to plan further activities in order to promote Quebec theatre as a whole. On November 4 and 5, the CQT's biennial congress and annual general meeting will take place, under the theme of *Institutional Theatres and Development of the Theatre Art*. You can consult the program of the congress -- in English -- at http://www.cqt.ca/evenements/congres_2011.

Most importantly, the QDF has become a relevant force in our own community: the English-language theatre artists of Quebec. Last year's workshop series for emerging artists was a huge success, in partnership with MainLine Theatre. We continued our partnership with the Montreal Fringe, with Tamara Brown moderating a panel on diversity during the festival. The Fringe also continued to partner with the QDF to give QDF members discounted tickets on Fringe productions.

But what I'm proudest of is the Theatre Calendar launches. At last year's AGM, I expressed the hope that the Calendar launches would not be a mere flash in the pan. To the contrary; they have caught fire. Writing this, I find it hard to believe that it's only been a year since the first one; the launches have

become, to me, such an integral part of what we do at QDF that I find it hard to imagine an English theatre season without them. What I've found most extraordinary is that they've given me an opportunity to meet our artists from every level, from community theatre groups to the most established institutions. Sometimes the QDF can feel a bit like the Montreal independent theatre federation (or maybe that's just me); the Calendar launches remind me every time what the true scope of the QDF membership is and how active we really are. Thanks to MainLine Theatre, the Rialto, the Segal Centre, the Centre St-Ambroise and the Montreal Fringe, and Centaur Theatre. (The next launch will be December 12 at the Rialto. Save the date!)

As a direct result of the launches, we have had to increase the print run of the Theatre Calendar; we are now working on updating the design of the Calendar, and looking at the feasibility of printing in colour.

We still have a ways to go: as Pat Donnelly of the *Gazette* has pointed out, there still isn't a lot of attendance at the launches by the general public. But we've taken the first step, in giving the public an exciting event to attend.

I would like to thank everyone who has sat on the board or any of our committees in these last few years; I'd also like to thank once again the QDF's staff. Most of all, I'd like to thank our Executive Director, Jane Needles. Many don't realize it, but the scope of her job is huge: simultaneously Executive Director, General Manager, office coordinator, grant writer, translator, political advocate, project manager, communications director, and, let us not forget, caterer. Thanks in huge part to her work, we have been able to stabilize our government funding, finally obtaining multi-year operating funding from CALQ for instance. If we have turned a corner over the last few years, it's because we have had such a steady hand at the wheel.

Looking forward, however, we still have a lot of work to do. 2012 marks the 40th anniversary of the QDF, and twenty years since the Quebec Drama Festival became the Quebec Drama Federation, in 1992. Coincidentally, 1992 was the year I arrived in Montreal, to attend Concordia University. At the time, the only thing I knew about English theatre in Montreal was the Fringe. Since then, classmates of mine like Dean Fleming, David King, and Quincy Armorer have become Artistic Directors in their own right; Liz Valdez and Lisa Kagan have created SHIFT space, where we are having our AGM. When I graduated from Concordia, it was rare to see students stay in Montreal for more than a couple of years before heading to greener pastures. Now we have some pretty green pastures to call our own.

As I leave my tenure as President, I look forward to celebrating that success with all of you, and to introducing my son to a vibrant, exciting, creative and tenacious community of theatre artists.

Cheers,

Patrick



Quebec Drama Federation - Annual General Meeting October 17, 2011

Executive Director's Report

Another year has flown by and I realize that I have been your Executive Director for three and a half years now. Many things have happened over this time, and I am very proud of the accomplishments that we have achieved together as a community and as a team.

Perhaps the most successful of these is the Theatre Calendar launches as has been mentioned by Patrick. Slowly we are making the larger community aware of just what we can do and the quality of work we can produce. We noted over the past few weeks 39 productions alone that are listed in the Fall 2011 Theatre Calendar that are playing during the time period covered. And on top of that there was one week alone in the past two weeks that there were 17 different productions playing, opening or somehow available to the public – numbers which become unprecedented.

Yet, this is just the tip of the iceberg, and only the beginning of the new adventure we as a community are embarking upon. The touring project has put us in touch with the regions more than ever before, and now we need the artists who are willing to step up to the plate and provide workshops, guidance performances, and all other types of services to these areas that are so desperate to have English language theatre provided to them. Geordie has always done amazing work in this area, and continue to do so, and now there are some others beginning to find ways to reach them, but there is so much more work to do. The Video Conferencing Network is a demonstration of how technology can aid in this all-important outreach. But it needs each of you as well, to come to us at QDF and figure out new and innovative ways we can add to make the regions feel that they as much part of the community as they ought to be.

Next year we celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the founding of QDF as the Quebec Drama Festival, and there are many plans being prepared to mark the occasion. The Communications Committee will be hard at work to determine exactly what will transpire, but we can note that there will be a redesign of the Theatre Calendar itself, an anniversary book/video/DVD, and undoubtedly a major party. Stay tuned. We seem to be getting good at the parties! What better way to bring the community together?

On the lobbying and advocacy level, QDF is actively involved in working with the CQT and the Department of Canadian Heritage ensuring that the needs of the English Speaking theatre community are voiced and heard. We have also actively participated in dialogue sessions of Agenda 21C which is a project of the Ministère de la culture et communications et la condition feminine endeavouring to have culture established as the fourth pillar of society within the Province of Quebec, thereby becoming the only province in Canada to do so, and joining the International Community which has already established this principle. Further to this, we work actively with the Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation where arts and culture are now being recognized as an entrepreneurial component of Economic Development as a whole, resulting in Industry Canada starting to understand that arts are not a frivolity. This is a very important major step in recognition of our community.

So many other things continue to progress and evolve, namely our Facebook and social networking presence, our email updates and the information they provide, our workshops series, our counseling services, our open door policy, our student auditions, our talks with the schools, our work with the companies, and countless other things.

But none of this would happen without the incredible staff I have. We have said goodbye to Alix Pitula this past summer, who has gone on to further her adventures in her own new business undertaking. We miss her, and wish her the very best of luck. Manoj Chandarana, our accountant, who has been with us for so many years now. He really started his career in Montreal with QDF and now works many of you with your own accounting, along with several companies. His solid knowledge of our crazy profession now makes him an invaluable asset to it, and for that I am forever grateful. Kathryn Cleveland worked with us for six months, during which she completed the Doing Theatre in Montreal updating so that it can now be placed on the website, as well as Phase II of the Touring Project, and several other projects. She was also our Stage Manager extraordinaire for the launches since last March, and we are crossing our fingers that we can persuade her to temporarily take a break in her studies in Teaching English as a second language Masters' program at McGill to help us again in December. Eduardo Encinas Mena, was our Intern from Mexico for six months, and amongst many things he did for us, his major accomplishment was the cataloguing of the entire Resource Centre in Library fashion so that it too can be put on the website. And then there is Liz Truchanowicz who has worked with Kathryn on the completion of Phase II of the touring project, but primarily is the wisdom and research behind the workshop series of last year and this year. Also, her ability to teach me the intricacies of the changing technology conundrum of computers and telephones has made her invaluable in the office to all of us. And last but not least is Cassandra Tognieri – our Communications officer, whose bubbling personality adds happiness and a giggle to the office every day. She is the one who keeps the community apprised of all that is going on, co-ordinates the Theatre Calendar production and dissemination, Facebook's all of you, and maintains the website. All this while maintaining her talents in her first love of acting, which many of you see. We are looking for a new person to add to this dynamic team, and we should be able to announce soon who that might be. There are not enough words to say thank you to all of them. But donations to the sushi fund will help! Suffice to say, they are the backbone of QDF!

And the Board of Directors also provide a major source of support and guidance. While we have lost the participation of Lisa Kagan as President, we gained the insights of Patrick Goddard, and his abilities to add a new dimension to the work that QDF undertakes. I have particularly enjoyed his active participation in committees with the CQT and others, and his challenging new ideas and thoughts. I will miss him in this role, but do totally understand the challenges of new parenthood that he and Sophie are about to undertake (I am a mother for 4!) and so with sadness also understand the reasons he is stepping down as President. Fortunately, we will not lose his participation on the Board itself. I welcome a new President and look forward to maintaining the pace of new initiatives and challenges with that person that QDF will be undertaking over the next years.

Thank you yet again to all the volunteers, especially Peter Payan, Christine Dandurand, Joan Donnelly Megan Bradley, and the many others that have given so freely of their time for all the events we undertake and participate in. There is no way to account for this commitment and what it means to QDF's ability to serve the community. Add to this the partner companies who have hosted the launches. And to our Corporate supporters, especially McAuslan Breweries, who is again providing beer for tonight.

And to you the community, thank you for being there, and believing that we are a strong community, a vital and viable one, and one that will continue to grow and thrive over the long term.

Here's to the long-term of all we do and stand for. And to the next 40 years!