



COMMON BOOTS THEATRE

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Why join our Board of Directors?

We are a small but mighty group of passionate arts professionals and volunteers, committed to doing things better and having fun doing it.

Joining the Board of Directors allows you to be part of the ongoing success of Common Boots Theatre. Our board is made up of community leaders who come from different professions, backgrounds and perspectives, with the shared goal of participating in and giving back to the theatre community in Toronto.

The common thread is the belief in our mandate, the alignment of personal values.

Our board members have the opportunity to develop their professional skills - sometimes leveraging existing expertise or trying something new; growing their own personal network (and by extension ours); and having behind the scenes access to the artistic work.

About the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors role is to provide foresight, oversight and insight to the organization. *
Roles and Responsibilities attached at the end of this document.

The board extends a high level of trust and confidence in the Leadership Team (Artistic Director and Managing Producer) to run the organization. Together, we meet to share and discuss updates on the organization's progress, successes and opportunities.

While the Leadership Team focus on the day-to-day operations of the company, the Board participates in strategic initiatives and revenue generation.

The Board may have a range of 3 to 15 active directors, with an ideal group of 9 each term. The range allows the board to prepare for succession planning, as well as periods of growth, expansion or significant change.

There are no official qualifications to be a board member, other than not being excluded by the Income Tax Act. We welcome Community leaders with a love of theatre, a sense of humour and the following core competencies to join us:

Accountable & Dependable
Ethical & Integral
Problem Solver

Proactive Communication
Decision Maker
Planner & Organizer

Time Commitment

Regular meetings are held every 4 - 6 weeks from September through June.

Meetings are currently held via Zoom in the early evening and are 1.5 - 2 hours in length. We hope to return to in-person/hybrid meetings as of our 2023-2024 fiscal year (location to be determined). Materials are circulated in advance (when applicable) and reviewing materials in advance is required.

Additionally, Board members are expected to attend performances and events. Although our schedule may vary year to year, we typically organize 4 - 6 events.

Current Board (2022-2023 Season)

Ryan Singh

President/Chair

Senior Education Manager: Young People's Theatre

Reverend Norm Seli

Treasurer/Secretary

Ordained Minister - the United Church of Canada; Community engagement and transformation

Michele Chan

Talent and Culture Manager - dbrand, Human Resources

Richard Paul Chan 陳駿華

Director, Regulatory Affairs - CBC/Radio-Canada; HBA, LLB, MBA, JD

Dr Elizabeth Christie

Physician, Public Health expert (prior Lawyer practicing public interest & environmental law)

Alexandra Simpson

Co-Artistic Leader - Animacy Collective; PhD candidate in Environmental Studies - York University.

Courtenay Stevens

Actor; educator.

HOW WE WORK

The Company

Common Boots aims to create work in an environment that includes and welcomes many. We try to include as many perspectives where possible, including initiatives focused on accessibility (e.g. ASL interpreters and audio description), communications (e.g. straight-forward written English without complicated grammatical structures), accommodations for those who work differently as well as considerations for artists with children or in caregiving roles. These considerations are evolving. As we learn more, we include more. We continue to work toward a mode of working that addresses these needs and is flexible to include needs as they arise.

Values

From its inception, Common Boots has always tried to push back against the conventions of the times and lead the way forward by example. At the beginning (1980s), under the leadership of Leah Cherniak and Martha Ross, this meant providing meaningful art from women's perspectives, expanding the possibilities of women in comedy, and providing work and training opportunities for women to work professionally in theatre. Later, we redefined where theatre could take place with large-scale outdoor winter productions, and then explorations of private life in the public sphere. With Jennifer Brewin and Alex Bulmer, Common Boots started to explore pushing boundaries of theatre with a disability lens, redefining audio-led theatre and accessible dramaturgy. All along the way, there have been constant elements: **Comedy, Collaboration, and Care.**

Comedy, broadly speaking, is more than just being funny. It also means a sense of play, a curiosity to explore, and the daring to fail. With the creation of new works, some of which are now cherished classics in the Canadian theatre canon, we've explored new themes, dismantled tired tropes, and sought new expressions. We continue to find new playful ways to engage our audiences, make them think differently about the world, and reveal what is funny about the human condition in the present world.

Collaboration has always been at the heart of the way we create. Whether it's a collective creation, researching democratic elections processes, or inviting community choirs to sing in our shows, we have always sought a multitude of opinions and participation. This continues to be a cornerstone of how we operate, and affects the way we program and put our shows together. We are constantly seeking opportunities to include more input and to reveal new perspectives. We are committed to working closely with our artists to be true to our stories together in order to share them with our audiences, who are also part of this collaboration.

Care is central to the way we operate and treat each other. It also underlines how seriously we are approaching our efforts for Inclusion, and making our company a welcoming home for artists with disabilities and beyond. This is a philosophy that we continue to practice and adapt for other forms of Inclusion, extending that concern to everyone we interact with from artists to audiences.

Common Boots Theatre is a member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT) and engages professional artists who are members of Canadian Actors' Equity Association (CAEA) under the terms of the jointly negotiated Canadian Theatre Agreement.

We are also members of the Canadian Green Alliance, and we prioritize finding sustainable methods to do our work.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Collective Board of Directors

As per the requirements of the CRA and Income Tax Act, the Board of Directors as a whole will ensure the organization is:

- Engaging only in allowable activities (charitable purposes);
- Keeping adequate books and records;
- Issuing complete and accurate donation receipts;
- Meeting annual spending requirements;
- Filing an annual T3010 information return;
- Maintaining the charity's status as a legal entity; and
- Informing the Charities Directorate of changes to the mode of operation or legal structure.

To that end, the Board of Directors is tasked with the following responsibilities:

- Establish, review, and approve by-laws and policies;
- Top level oversight to ensure the company is fulfilling its mandate and mission;
- Collaborate with the Artistic Director and Managing Producer to develop Strategic Plans and oversee their implementation, providing guidance when appropriate/ requested;
- Review results against plans (revenue generation, and operational and artistic goals);
- Oversight of overall financial health including risk management;
- Review and approve annual/multi-year operating budgets and extraordinary expenditures;
- Appoint an independent auditor to conduct an annual audit and approve the audited financial statements prior to filing with the CRA;
- Hire, advise, support, and (if necessary) release the Artistic Director and Managing Producer. This includes participation in performance reviews and establishing compensation);
- Propose a slate of directors and fill vacancies as required;
- Be brand ambassadors, represent the company at public events, and demonstrate the mandate, mission, and values;
- Conduct annual self-assessment of the company's own effectiveness;
- Ensure compliance with legal requirements including all filings with CRA; and
- Ensure adequate insurance is in place.

Individual Directors

- Serve a term of 3 years (renewable);
- Prepare to participate in meetings by reviewing materials in advance (when applicable);
- Be aware of legal and financial responsibilities of serving on a board of directors of a registered charity;
- Support fundraising and revenue generation efforts. This may be by making a donation, soliciting donations, making introductions to funders/donors/audience members, attendance and/or sale of tickets to fundraising events, and participation in initiatives;
- Act in best interest of the organization and excuse themselves from discussion where there is conflict of interest;
- Base approval decisions on the Board's fiduciary duty to the company without interfering in the artistic decisions of the Artistic Director. When evaluating a production or project proposal, Directors should consider factors such as the mandate, mission, values, budget reasonableness, and community engagement, instead of their view of the production theme or message;
- Attendance at performances and events.