



Sheridan

Canadian Music Theatre Project:

The next
10 years

Our future
brims with
opportunity.

*We're ready to take the musical theatre
renaissance into our next decade
– and we want you by our side.*

Join us, and help shape the next decade of musical theatre in Canada.

Great musicals transport audiences to a place, and time, far beyond the stage. Music heightens and carries emotion, while song lyrics offer a fresh look into our world, revealing a culture's stories and the essence of what it is to be human. Through the power of musical theatre, we can explore each others' experiences, overcome differences, and share the common bonds that unite us.

Creating great musicals takes time, and space, for writers, composers and lyricists to take risks and explore new ideas. It takes talented actors who can bring ideas to life. And it takes a supportive network of theatre professionals to provide encouragement and advice. In short, it takes Sheridan's Canadian Music Theatre Project.

In our first 10 years, we've ignited a renaissance in Canadian musical theatre, and generated an industry that is now producing, and nurturing, homegrown musicals. Already, we've incubated 26 productions, 10 of which are currently heading toward professional premieres, earning acclaim and awards along the way. And, of course, there's *Come From Away*, the international smash hit that has received rave reviews from around the world and is now in its fourth year on Broadway.

What makes CMTP unique is simple – we tell the stories from our own backyard. The heroics of Terry Fox. Marc Hall's passion and perseverance to fight for acceptance of the LGBTQ community. The compassion of the people of Gander, Newfoundland. Through musical theatre, CMTP brings history to life, and preserves Canadians' answers to the social and political challenges of our time, giving future generations the chance to learn from their timeless messages of kindness, acceptance, and hope.

Now, it's time for us to look ahead to our next decade. One that will see the musical theatre renaissance merge with new technologies, and bring Indigenous and other underrepresented voices into the canon of musical theatre.

By making a gift to the Indigenous and Underrepresented Stories Fund, the Musical Innovation Fund, or the International Opportunities Fund, you'll be a part of these exciting next steps. You can meet the demand for musical theatre that is forward-thinking and ready to embrace diverse stories, and unique ways of telling them. You'll help examine the influence musical theatre has on our social fabric, and explore how Canadian content turns from heartwarming story to economic impact when it's shared internationally.

How to make a great musical

In 10 years, we've learned a lot. The most important lesson? The more ways CMTP supports a project through workshops, readings, masterclasses and presentations, the greater its chance of success.

Each year, we welcome three or four creative teams to CMTP. Sheridan provides them with a writer's fee, a professional director and music director, and they work with a talented cast of fourth-year Bachelor of Music Theatre Performance students to bring their scripts to life. Most importantly, the teams get to spend five weeks writing, re-writing, and exploring new ideas on stage.

They also tap into the expertise of CMTP's Producing Artistic Director and other faculty who help them focus on their creative direction, and guide them on their journey to create a successful musical. At the end of five weeks, the workshop culminates in 45-minute presentations to a live audience, one of which is free to the public.

But we don't end our support there. Creative teams often go on to stage their work at Theatre Sheridan, showing the completed two-act musical in front of a live audience over a two-week period. We also offer masterclasses with veteran writers, attendance at other festivals, additional workshops with student casts, and stage off-Sheridan readings where writers can glean more insight and refine their work. And through our longstanding relationships with regional theatres, we can give creative teams even more chances to continue to develop their work.

We've developed a formula that works. In only 10 years, 11 of the 26 musicals we've workshopped have gone on to premiere professionally. With your support, we'll welcome more creative teams to CMTP, giving new voices the chance to share their stories with the world.

“
(CMTP is) a win-win situation. For the creators, you develop the show without being under a microscope. You can make your mistakes, and the students are so eager and malleable.”

– Neil Bartram, Composer and Lyricist, *The Theory of Relativity*



CMTP: A commitment to research and creativity

We never stop looking for ways to innovate in the arts. CMTP is proud to be embedded among Sheridan's rich research and incubation centres, which are delivering creative, purposeful and innovative research to our faculty, students and partners.

That includes projects to expand Canadian theatre. In 2018, Sheridan Professor Dr. Brandon McFarlane received a two-year grant to bring creative problem solving skills to the local arts community, with a focus on expanding the Toronto Fringe Festival's Theatre Entrepreneurs' Networking and Training (TENT) program.

Partnering with our colleagues at Sheridan's Screen Industry Research and Training Centre also allows us to merge artistic vision with limitless technology. The Digital Stage project is just the beginning. SIRT's reputation for excellence in research for film, television and interaction media is truly cutting edge; the centre recently earned funding from the Canada Foundation for Innovation to further its work into virtual humans for media.

By supporting CMTP, you're not just supporting theatre. You're demonstrating a commitment to think about new ways to create musical theatre, and re-imagining how it is shared in our communities.



Meet the man behind a musical juggernaut

CMTP's founder and producing artistic director Michael Rubinoff has a sixth sense. He knows what will captivate audiences, and how to tell the story. In 2011, he approached David Hein and Irene Sankoff with an idea that was a bit unorthodox for the world of musical theatre – tell a story about the aftermath of 9/11. Sankoff and Hein agreed, and they turned it into *Come From Away*, now the longest-running Canadian musical on Broadway.

Come From Away was the first production Rubinoff brought to CMTP, truly setting the stage for excellence. A lawyer and commercial theatre producer, Rubinoff came to Sheridan in 2010 to lead the theatre programs and to create Canada's first permanent incubator for new musicals. Today, he hones his industry expertise as a producer and the creative consultant for *Come From Away*'s productions on Broadway, in London's West End, Toronto, Melbourne, and on the North American tour.

In 2018, Rubinoff was awarded the Meritorious Service Cross by the Governor General of Canada for his role in creating *Come From Away*. Rubinoff is a former board member and president of the Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts, and a member of the Minister of Heritage's Advisory Group on Canadian Cultural Initiatives in China. But what truly allows him to get a CMTP production from school to stage is not his credentials, it is his commitment to invest in bold, new ideas.

"Most people say it's such a risk to take on new musicals because they're unknown and audiences won't come. I think it's just the opposite: people are hungry for new musicals."

“
We’re contributing both talent and new work to the canon of music theatre – as a centre of education, as a centre of research and a centre of innovation and creativity.

– Michael Rubinoff, Producing Artistic Director, CMTP



Indigenous and Underrepresented Stories Fund – \$2.5 million

Come From Away. Marathon of Hope. The Louder We Get. CMTP has told the story of Canada – one that reflects our nation’s resilience, fundamental hope for a better future, and rejection of intolerance. But there’s something missing.

Our Indigenous peoples and people of colour must also be heard. Their languages, music and song are a part of Canada’s cultural tapestry. With your support, we’ll give them the space they deserve on our stages.

Together with new writing teams that reflect Indigenous and Underrepresented voices, your support will allow us to travel to these communities, and become immersed in the land and place that gave rise to their stories. We can afford the creators time to refine their approaches, and offer them resources to bring their stories to broader audiences. We’ll encourage students from these communities to pursue studies in the theatre, and bring their unique experiences to our classrooms.

As an academic institution, Sheridan is committed to diversity and inclusivity, and these values inform our work every day. Now, we have the chance to learn with these communities and bring their stories into the canon of musical theatre in an authentic and respectful way. And it’s work that we’re beginning immediately.

In the summer of 2020, a group of our students will begin working with Juno-winning artist Susan Aglukark as part of a new partnership to tell the story of Inuk – a young man on a quest to understand his identity against the backdrop of a looming natural threat.

Through the Indigenous and Underrepresented Stories Fund, students will learn directly from cultural leaders, while sharing CMTP’s expertise to help develop musicals that reveal a rich part of Canada’s cultural fabric. At the same time, the CMTP will be working to make the productions commercially viable and ready to be shared with the world.

With a gift of \$2.5 million, you’ll allow us to take risks on new ideas and new voices that are not represented in musical theatre’s repertoire. We’ll embrace the opportunity to engage with these communities, give these creators space and place to experiment with their work and share and celebrate their stories.

Musical Innovation Fund

– \$2.5 million

Every musical starts with a nugget of an idea that needs time and space to take shape. The CMTF has become a key player in Canada's musical theatre renaissance because we believe there's no limit on how those ideas can grow.

Our next 10 years will be digital, and investments from supporters like you will immerse audiences in theatre in new ways. Theatre goers will leap into a musical through virtual reality. Audiences on opposite sides of the globe will take in a performance at the same time.

Motion capture technologies, sound sampling software and artificial intelligence will also open musical theatre to new realms, and CMTF is well-positioned at the forefront of this revolution. In late 2019, we partnered with Sheridan's Screen Industry Research and Training Centre, The National Ballet of Canada and the Canadian Opera Company to embark on the Digital Stage. This project supports up to five independent creative projects and teams comprised of choreographers, directors, composers, lyricists, writers and designers, including one with an Indigenous team.

With your support, in our next decade we'll fully nurture and invest in new writers so they can commercialize their work, and take advantage of all that technology has to as they chart their pathway to success.

Brantwood

90

characters
(portrayed by 40 actors)

40

musical numbers

200

authentic scenes

15

scenes occurring
simultaneously
at any given time

Innovation puts audience inside *Brantwood*

In the next decade, audiences will come to expect storytelling that goes beyond the stage and reveals something exceptional. Luckily, CMTP is no stranger to ground breaking, innovative storytelling, and we're not afraid to break the rules, especially if it means we can enhance audience experiences. In 2015, we did just that with *Brantwood*, a site-specific theatrical experience featuring the first graduating class of the Bachelor of Music Theatre.

In *Brantwood*, CMTP's creative team turned an abandoned school in Oakville into a time machine that transported audiences into a choose-your-own-adventure experience that spanned across a century. Spectators decided which storyline to follow as they wandered through classrooms and halls in a production featuring 90 characters (portrayed by 40 actors) 200 scenes, 40 musical numbers, with 15 scenes occurring simultaneously at any given time.

Richard Ouzounian, theatre critic for the Toronto Star, called *Brantwood* "a landmark project created by some of the most innovative people on our theatre scene," and in 2015 it won the Audience Choice Award for Outstanding Toronto Production at the Dora Mavor Moore Awards.



International Musical Development Fund – \$2.5 million

CMTP's influence is far reaching, and we are eager global citizens. Each year, five Honours Bachelor of Music Theatre Performance students complete an intensive 14-week summer internship that includes workshops and activities in post-secondary and professional theatres around the world. Students host and participate in master classes and in knowledge exchanges with other students and faculty with diverse backgrounds and perspectives.

We are also bringing international talent to Sheridan. Every year, we receive scripts from writers all around the world. With your gift, we'll be able to fund projects with more of them. Our musical development fund will allow us to attract and support experienced veterans with Broadway and West End credits who can harness our students' talents to create something ground breaking. In turn, they'll mentor our students and fledgling writers, giving them the chance to learn from the best talent in the industry.

The fund will also let us build connections with educational, commercial, and not-for-profit organizations globally. We'll foster partnerships with these groups so we can offer creative teams more opportunities to see their work on stage, and we'll export our CMTP presentations. With our international reputation for excellence, there is potential to build a showcase for CMTP productions in New York, Shanghai, London or Sydney. We'll bring our productions to new audiences for our stories, and build more partnerships to expand the number of international creative teams whose musicals we're able to incubate at Sheridan.



New opportunities to Grow

In 2016, writer Matt Murray, composer Colleen Dauncey, pictured left and lyricist Akiva Romer-Segal, right, came to CMTP to develop *Rumspringa Break! An Amish Musical*. This fun new production told the story of Amish twin sisters who set off on Rumspringa – an ancient tradition that gives them time to explore the wider world before being baptized into their faith forever – only to end up working in a marijuana grow-op.

Since its first CMTP workshop, *Rumspringa Break!* has gone on a journey of its own. Today, it's called *Grow*, and its being performed on stages across North America. We've partnered with the Grand Theatre in London, Ontario, to give *Grow* more time to test new ideas on stage. In 2019, the production returned to Sheridan for another workshop, and to join our Festival of New Musicals. Then, in early 2020, *Grow* followed in the footsteps of other vaunted productions like *Come From Away* and *The Theory of Relativity* to be featured at the Goodspeed Festival of New Musicals.



Bringing Norman Bethune to life

Music and song have a unique way of revealing the personalities and events of the past – sometimes offering a revisionist view of our history. In 2017, CMTP workshopped a musical by Neil Bartram, Brian Hill and Chinese playwright Nick Ronhjun Yu about the life of Norman Bethune, a physician and medical innovator who served on battlefields in Spain and China. Bethune is remembered as both rude and alienating, as well as caring and compassionate. Canadians know little about him, but he was a god-like icon in Maoist China for his medical contributions during the Sino-Japanese War. The musical explores the dichotomies of this complicated man, and plans are underway to share with Chinese audiences through future workshops in that country.

Stories like Bethune's are just the beginning. With your support, we'll uncover more, and give audiences in Canada and abroad a chance to see our country's story through a new lens.

“ I think what makes CMTP the most beneficial to writers and creators is that you are immersing yourself in an environment that is wholeheartedly there to support the creation of musical theatre.”

– Matt Murray, composer, *Grow*



Come From Away – the start of a moment in CMTP history

Before *Come From Away* won a Tony Award for Best Direction, took home the Laurence Olivier Award for Best Musical, became the longest running Canadian musical on Broadway, or earned a staggering \$330 million worldwide, it was just a spark of an idea to create a musical about something completely unexpected.

In 2012, Irene Sankoff and David Hein came to the CMTP to create a musical about the compassion and kindness that the people of Newfoundland showed to 6,579 airline passengers stranded there after the 9/11 attacks grounded air travel. Armed with the amazing real-life stories from people in Gander and surrounding communities, and an upbeat, Celtic-inspired musical repertoire to draw on, they arrived at Sheridan where a cast of 12 eager students and the advice and encouragement of Michael Rubinoff gave shape to one of the biggest hit Canadian-born musicals ever.

The original 45-minute reading was presented in 2012, followed by a two-act production in 2013. It debuted at Goodspeed Festival of New Musicals in January 2013, followed by the National Alliance for Musical Theatre in October 2013, where it was discovered by commercial producers eager to bring the musical to Broadway.

Since then, *Come From Away* has shot across the globe, showing Australians, New Yorkers and Brits alike how a bowl of soup, a friendly neighbour and a cod-kissing screech-in can be a balm during trying times.

“Simply put, none of *Come From Away*’s success and the opportunities we’ve received because of it, would have been possible without The Canadian Music Theatre Project.”

– Irene Sankoff and David Hein, *Come From Away*

An Important New Initiative

It's no surprise that we've been called "the most important new initiative" in musical theatre. In just 10 years, CMTP has had a big impact. Eleven of the 26 productions we've incubated have gone on to premiere professionally.

33 1/3 / *Atlantis* / **Come From Away**

Grow / **Kelly V Kelly** / *Leading Lady*

Marathon of Hope: The Musical

Pump Up The Volume

The Enlightenment of Percival von Schmootz

The Louder We Get / **The Theory of Relativity**

It's been a decade of incredible accomplishments. With the help of our supporters, the next phase in our journey will be even more remarkable.

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