

A Report to the Community from the Citadel Board & Management

Introduction

In late January of 2018, The Board and management of the Citadel Theatre identified that some former and current staff and artists held negative sentiments about their past experiences with the organization. Upon the appointment of new Executive and Artistic Directors, informal reports of past bullying and harassing behaviors surfaced. The number of complainants and the nature of their reports suggested that the issues reported spanned a number of seasons and involved a number of people, rather than representing a singular event.

The management and Board of the Citadel determined that prompt action was required to gather additional information about the nature of the complaints and underlying issues and to take steps to ensure that the Citadel is a safe workplace, free from harassment and bullying.

In March of 2018, the Citadel shared a letter signed by Daryl Cloran that acknowledged the historical issues reported and invited members of the community to come forward to share their experiences and concerns through a professionally guided and confidential disclosure process.

The Citadel's goals in embarking on this process were as follows:

- To provide multiple safe and supportive channels for the current team and greater community to share their stories and express their concerns in confidence.
- To use the summary information gathered to gain a clear understanding of the scope and details of the reported issues, develop an action plan to prevent such issues, and ensure that the Citadel has the policy infrastructure and practices in place to ensure an environment that is safe and free from harassment for employees, artists, and volunteers.
- To review the Citadel's policies and procedures, particularly its Workplace and/or Sexual Harassment Policy and its Code of Conduct to confirm that they are meeting or exceeding the requirements of the law and best practices.
- Ultimately, to rebuild trust within the artistic community and allow affected community members an opportunity to reclaim the Citadel space.

Actions Taken

The Executive, working with the Board of Directors, implemented a process to receive feedback in a confidential and structured manner. The Citadel engaged safe disclosure expert, Wade King, to set up a process to allow individuals to bring concerns forward about their past experiences in a safe and supported manner (the "Safe Disclosure Process"). The Safe Disclosure Process was designed to be purposefully broad to allow any member of the community-at-large to bring forward reports about historical events or current concerns. Community members had multiple options for reporting and seeking assistance including using the confidential disclosure portal/hotline, speaking to their supervisor, a member of Citadel management, directly to Artistic Director Daryl Cloran, or speaking to a Citadel Board Member.

In parallel, the Executive, working with legal and workplace harassment experts, reviewed and refreshed the Citadel's Workplace and/or Sexual Harassment Policy and its Code of Conduct as well as the practices related to reporting of issues to confirm that they were in keeping with the law and best governance models.

Wade King met with complainants, recorded concerns, anonymized information and provided an independent report to the Executive and Board that:

- Identified themes/areas of concern reported to him within the Safe Disclosure Process
- Provided high-level recommendations as to how to address the identified areas of concern
- Suggested a future reporting systems structure
- Recommended changes to related workplace systems and cultures
- Supported the current form and function of the reviewed and revised policy and procedures pertaining to conduct and a safe work environment

This information, and Wade's further guidance, was used to create an event in May 2018 that focused on acknowledging these issues and providing an opportunity to reclaim the Citadel space.

May 14 Event

Members of Edmonton's Theatre Community (approximately 100 in total) gathered for a facilitated event aimed at reclaiming the Citadel as a safe workplace. The session was hosted by the Board and Management and facilitated by Wade King.

The event was intended to allow participants to share their experiences, perspectives and advice with each other and with Citadel Executive Management and Board of Directors members. Though not intended to duplicate the Safe Disclosure Process, the discussion was intended to allow for an open and honest acknowledgement of the participants' experiences at the Citadel over many decades and to underscore the Citadel's commitment to address reported historical challenges and build for the future.

The first part of the event centered around the question "What do you want us to know?" and these are some of the things we heard in response:

- My experience at the Citadel was characterized by fear, intimidation and isolation.
- My experience at the Citadel changed the trajectory of my life.
- There was nobody to talk to, or when you spoke up, no one listened or you were punished.
- The Citadel failed to develop and feature Edmonton's best artists, actors and playwrights.
- I feel ashamed that I didn't speak up.
- I'm grateful for this process.
- The Citadel has not provided opportunities for diverse artists and minorities.
- We need to be proactive in making sure this never happens again.
- We need to recreate the Citadel as a joyful place.

The second part of the facilitated discussion sought the advice of the group regarding changes the Board and Management should consider in the continued pursuit of a safe, creative workplace. The advice included the following considerations:

- Policies and procedures dealing with complaints must provide reasonable protections for complainants and/or allow for confidentiality and/or anonymity and should allow for escalation or multiple options for reporting if required.
- Changes to Citadel policies and practices must be accompanied by changes to the protection offered by Canadian Actors Equity.
- The Safe Disclosure Process, which has recently been made available, should continue to be available.
- The Citadel strategy and approach should reflect diversity as a fundamental value.
- Citadel Executive and Board should share the learnings of this process, especially with other large theatre/artistic companies across Canada.
- Everyone from theatre executives to child chaperones must be aware of best practices for oversight and accountability of theatre management, employees and contractors.
- The Citadel should consider providing intimacy training for shows that include sexually charged work (this is a new and evolving practice within the theatre community).
- It would be positive to create more opportunities to hear from and connect with the Board of Directors.
- Leadership needs to be held accountable, which may require new mechanisms to be created and employed.
- The Citadel should find ways to engage others (not present at the session) in this process.
- The Citadel should encourage a community feel by finding ways to engage and gather the artistic community on a regular basis outside of regular programming.
- The Board of Directors should consider including artist representatives.
- The composition of the Board should reflect the diversity of the community.
- The Board of Directors should reflect on this process and their role in preventing these issues in the future.
- The Citadel needs to take specific measures to ensure that this history is not forgotten. Bake it into the institutional memory of the Citadel.

The session concluded with a “fellowship reception” featuring performances from Jennifer Wigmore (GotYourBack.ca) and Farren Timoteo.

In response to the community feedback, the report from Wade King and the ongoing work within the Safe Disclosure Process, the Executive and Board have undertaken a number of actions to address the issues identified and build an organizational structure that is accountable and responsive.

Actions Already completed

- Reviewed and refreshed policies related to creating a safe work environment including our Code of Conduct, Child Chaperone policy and feedback and reporting mechanisms.
- Communicated the new policy requirements to staff and included them in visiting artist packages.
- Hired a trained Human Resources professional to the Citadel staff.

- Implemented an in-person announcement by the Artistic and Executive Directors at the first rehearsal of each new production underscoring our commitment to a safe workplace, our participation in the Canadian Actors' Equity Association's *Not in Our Space* program, and providing information about policy, process and options for addressing issues.
- Conducted several all hands and team meetings with regard to culture and workplace environment, policies, practices and expectations around conduct and reporting.
- Met with IATSE Union leadership to discuss disclosure, policies and go forward activities.
- Piloted a "360 degree" evaluation process to give staff a means to provide feedback and flag any issues with management to the Board on an anonymous basis. The pilot was very successful and will be broadened to include more participants (both reviewers and reviewees) in the next iteration.
- Continued the Safe Disclosure Process while examining long term solutions.
- Reviewed the child chaperone policy and open rehearsals policy to ensure we are meeting parent and child actor needs and being proactive about best practices.
- Planned both management and harassment prevention training for all people leaders and high potentials in the organization.
- Worked with PACT and Canadian Actors Equity on harassment processes and procedures applicable under the CTA.
- Revised the visiting artist handbook, onboarding and exit procedures including surveys for visiting artists/crew upon completion of the show and exit interviews for staff.

In Progress

- Expansion of the 360 degree evaluation process: next year considering expanding the process to include not only staff and Board members as reviewers, but also actors and others who have worked at the Citadel and some key stakeholders in Edmonton's artistic community.
- Regular reporting by the Executive to the Board on Safe Workplace activities as well as any new disclosures or concerns.
- Activities to increase Board Visibility through events, visiting artist package information and direct contact information made available to stakeholders (Board contact email on website).
- Inclusion of Culture Work in Executive Goal Setting
- A follow up event as part of the Artist Exchange program to discuss what we have learned and what we as an organization and an artistic community need to continue to work on ([set for February 2019](#)).

We know that the work is far from done and that continued, earnest effort is required on an ongoing basis to ensure that the Citadel is an inclusive, positive, artistic community. We have begun the necessary work to make sure that the Citadel is a safe workplace, with a community that supports one another. We are confident that our Artistic Vision of being Inclusive, Innovative and International has begun to address the need for diversity and inclusion of the broader community as part of our artistic process, team and audience.

We continue to welcome feedback and dialogue with the community that we serve. We are humbled and grateful for the generous spirit that exists towards the Citadel's work in this regard.