



UPRISING theatre company
ANNUAL REPORT 2015 - 2017



STORIES TO CHANGE THE WORLD

Uprising Theatre Company tells stories that challenge perceptions, bring light to justice issues, and provide new ways forward.

Here's how:

We present honest, important, engaging plays featuring characters and issues that don't often take center stage.

Local organizations working on those very issues partner with us to marry art with action.

Incredible actors and a top-notch creative team bring those stories to life, while post-show talkbacks provide a forum for audiences to process the experience.

You connect with our community partners to help change the world in ways big and small — taking the magic of theatre off the stage and into the world.



LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

I have had the honor of serving as President of the Board at Uprising Theatre Company since its founding in July 2015. In these first two and a half years, under the leadership of Founder and Artistic Director Shannon T.L. Kearns, we have achieved many noteworthy successes.

Our shows have touched on some of the most pressing issues facing our world today: Suicide and mental health (Son of a Gun), the rights of queer people (Who Has Eyes to See), sexuality and body image (Sex in the

Dark), mass incarceration (Prometheus Bound), and, most recently, women's rights in the workplace (These Shining Lives) — a particularly poignant topic given what we have seen unfold over these last few months of 2017.

Moreover, we have stayed true to our commitment to feature writers and actors representing marginalized people groups not often seen in theatre; we have encouraged others to tell their stories through workshops and events; we have engaged audiences in meaningful talkbacks; and, we have seen our shows challenge and inspire audiences to take real action in collaboration with the community organizations that have generously partnered with us along the way to make a difference in our local community.

As we reflect on the successes of these first few years, I wish to take a moment to recognize Shannon, whose vision and tireless energy continue to drive Uprising forward, and our Board of Directors, whose infectious enthusiasm for this organization remains inspirational. I must also thank the many volunteers, actors, and crew members who have brought their passion and commitment to each show. Finally, I want to thank our generous donors, without whom none of this would have been possible: We are so grateful for your generosity.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adam Rao".

Adam K. Rao

President, Board of Directors

Uprising started with an experience ...



“I was in a production of *The Laramie Project*; a true play about the murder of Matthew Shepard. He was killed because he was gay. After the show, people would come up to me and say “Thank God stuff like this doesn’t happen anymore”— which as transgender person, I know is just not true. Or they’d say “We need to make sure this doesn’t happen anymore!” And then go home and back to their lives. All of the energy for change making dissipating as they entered the night air after the show.”

Shannon TL Kearns, Founder & Artistic Director

... and then a question

Is there a way to do high quality theatre that's not preachy or strident but that talks about important social issues? And is there a way to pair that theatre with concrete social change work?

... and then a Kickstarter

30	78	\$6,100
DAYS	BACKERS	RAISED



... and then one production



“Son of a Gun” An original show about mental health, suicide, and family trauma

It was a success, but it didn't stop there

People showed up in droves. Community partners signed on. At talkbacks, people shared heart wrenching stories of how the show related to their own lives. People left changed.

Since that first production Uprising has:

Produced 5 shows

Son of a Gun
Who Has Eyes to See
Sex in the Dark
Prometheus Bound
These Shining Lives

Expanded the board

5 working directors

Paid artists

27 actors
18 creative crew

Partnered with 15 community organizations

Survivor Resources
Midtown Community
Avenues for Homeless Youth
Transforming Families
PFLAG
Couples In Transition
Outfront MN
Smitten Kitten

Once Upon A Time Formals
Annex Teen Center
Sexual Violence Center
Rainbow Health Center
CTUL
Women's Prison Book Project
MN freedom fund

Made an impact in the community

110 books for prisoners
25 packs of underwear for assault survivors
36 pieces of formal wear for trans youth
105 people signed the letter for CTUL

61 signatures to protect transgender workers
17 people signed up to be bail runners
13 people signed up to host political organizing house parties

MOVING HEARTS IN THE THEATER



I saw Sex In The Dark and I loved it to tears. The characters were real and relatable and Shannon and Ashley and all the crew were such a pleasure to meet with after the show. This is the kind of theatre that you need to see.

Rei, *Sex in the Dark*



Hi, my woman and I experienced Sex in the Dark last night and loved it. It's a funny, powerful, and refreshing journey into one date of an early stage romantic couple, a transgender man and an unconventionally beautiful woman. Highly particular and massively universal.

Eduardo, *Sex in the Dark*



I loved the health of the post-transition relationships (all but mom). A great example of being trans and being healthy. I loved the show!

Anonymous, *Who Has Eyes to See*



Thank you for doing this remarkable work. Your presentation of this piece was tremendously done and I greatly appreciate you bringing this very important work to the stage.

Linda, *These Shining Lives*

A sad and powerful story told with sensitivity and honesty. Hard to believe but this happened almost 100 years ago and it still shines a relevant light on many battles we're still fighting today.

Anonymous, *These Shining Lives*

AND CHANGING LIVES OUT IN THE WORLD

We collected over three dozen articles of formal clothing, mostly gowns, also a couple of dress shirts. And I had a water pitcher set out to collect monetary donations. My pitch was “picture” your change making change in the outlook of a youth.....collected almost \$100

The most important thing I collected was contacts. We added a dozen names of people who want to volunteer with us next season.

It was wildly successful beyond anything I could have wished for. Thank you for making that possible.

Once Up A Time Formals

Partnering with Uprising was such an amazing opportunity for us and we are so grateful that you asked us to be included.

Approximately 40 pairs of underwear were donated—I didn’t count them because I was too eager and excited to get them to the hospitals! Whoops!

Being able to table at your shows was a wonderful experience. All of our advocates were excited about the conversations they had and the connections that they made with people while getting to share with them everything that SVC does.

We received some wonderful tweets from some of the other community partners and we are looking forward to reaching out to them to build community moving forward.

Sexual Violence Center



Our next season is our most ambitious ever: Four shows, more opportunities for early career artists, more transgender actors on stage and working behind the scenes, and continuing to pay all of our artists and creative staff.

Discover what's in store and find a part that you might play in our next act.



The Resistance of My Skin

Sex In The Dark was so popular we're bringing it back! With a completely revised and newly-titled script so even if you saw it during the last run there will be something new to see.

Ayden and Jess have been dating but they haven't had sex yet and no one can understand why.

Set in real time, Jess and Ayden are on a date where each one thinks that tonight might be the night.

Hilarious, awkward, and full of heart this play explores the possibility of overcoming fear to connect deeply with another person.

Twisted Deaths

Pam and Ryan couldn't be more different. He is a young transgender man and she is an 80 year old conservative but when they are both diagnosed with cancer their lives intersect in ways that neither of them could have ever imagined.

The Laramie Project and The Laramie Project: 10 Years Later

On October 6 1998, Matthew Shepard was beaten and left to die tied to a fence in the outskirts of Laramie, Wyoming. His torture and murder became a watershed historical moment in America. Members of Tectonic Theater Project traveled to Laramie and conducted interviews with the people of the town. From these interviews they wrote the play *The Laramie Project*.

Then in 2008, company members returned to Laramie to explore how the town had changed since the murder of Matthew Shepard. What they found defied their expectations. The result was a new play about how we construct our own history.

On the 20th anniversary of Matthew Shepard's death Uprising will present both pieces in reparatory, exploring how history is written and re-written.

Apples in Winter

Twenty-two years ago, Miriam's son, Robert, committed a horrible crime. Robert was caught, tried, and convicted of first-degree murder and has been sitting on death row ever since. In seven hours the state will execute him. As is the tradition, Robert is granted a last meal. His request: a slice of his mother's apple pie.

This will be a site specific performance with intimate audience seating in an industrial kitchen.

In three years, on a shoestring budget, we've already accomplished so much. Here's a snapshot of how we put your contributions to work in changing the world through art + action:

2017 Income & Expenses

INCOME

Grants & Donations

Individual donations: \$8,562

Organizational donations: \$1,517

Grants: \$3,000

Membership income: \$1,064

Tickets & Merchandise Sales

Merchandise: \$777

Ticket Sales: \$9,294

Benefits tickets: \$2,565

Total Income: \$26,778

EXPENSES

Rent: \$5,800

Stipends: \$2,800

Rights for scripts: \$1,600

General costs: \$9,462

Total expenses for shows: \$19,662

Admin/Marketing/Development: \$6,255

Total Expenses: \$26,219

How you can help change the world...

If you see value in this work, we'd love for you to be part of the magic. Here's how:

1. Share the word on social media
2. Become a member or make tax-deductible donation
3. Volunteer with us at a show, benefit, or community project

