



# THEATRE RHINOCEROS

John Fisher, Executive Artistic Director

Crystal Liu, Company Manager and Development Director

Joe Tally, President of the Board



# THEATRE RHINOCEROS

Presents

**2022–2027  
STRATEGIC PLAN**



## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Theatre Rhinoceros is a bold and inclusive community of artists and arts supporters who develop and produce theatre that enlightens, challenges, and brings joy to our diverse global community. We strive to be a global leader in LGBTQ+ storytelling that encourages and empowers artists and patrons to fight for a more just, equitable, and welcoming world where all may belong and have a voice.

# **THE RHINO**

## **VISION**

Queer theatre is entertainment. Entertainment is essential because it provides joy and insights and thereby builds community. Community inspires change and change brings growth.

## **HISTORY**

Founded in 1977, Theatre Rhinoceros is the longest-running LGBTQ theatre on the planet. From its inception, The Rhino has been dedicated to telling the stories of the queer community and creating a welcoming home for artists who are queer or allied to the queer world. Our track record is one of bold, innovative, exciting productions which emphasize the historical underpinning of the LGBTQ+ world even as they give voice to exciting emerging artists. Our diverse audiences have always been enthralled, challenged, and enlightened by our work even as we have been inspired and energized by their enthusiasm.

## **BOARD MEMBERS**

Josh Dunsby, Catherine Brannigan,  
Lawrence Dillon, Kim Larsen,  
Jeremy Laurin, Ely Sonny Orquiza,  
Craig Souza, Stan Stone



**REAL  
FEARLESS  
AMAZING**



# OUR VALUES

We value all artists who express a desire and a will to create and speak out.

We value all audiences that are receptive to the broadest possible definition of what it means to be queer, a definition that must respect the will and sanctity of others.

We value acceptance, belonging, and an embrace that stretches to all people.



We value focus, discipline, and professionalism because we take art seriously.

We value listening, adjusting, growing, adapting, pivoting.

We value stories as a property that can explain the world as it is and reimagine the world as it might be.

We value empathy.

We value fun.






# HELLO!

**Josh Dusby, Chair, Board of Directors**

“Theatre Rhinoceros is a beacon for inclusiveness and hope in our queer community. I grew up attending live theatre as a child and found great pleasure in the theatre productions I saw as a student at Wesleyan. What a pleasure it was to discover the work of Theatre Rhinoceros as it added my story to the stories I had witnessed growing up. Through decades of adaptation and growth, what we affectionately call The Rhino has come to personify the very best in welcoming, ambitious, entertaining LGBTQ+ story-telling. We look forward to many more decades of entertainment and thank our supporters and artists for their guidance in formulating this plan for an inclusive and fabulous future.”





**John Fisher, Executive Artistic Director**

“ Theatre is one of the oldest forms of communication — a person stands in front of other persons and tells a story. But what is the story, what does it mean, how does it inspire, how is it inspired by its listeners? In this Strategic Plan we want to celebrate the stories we’ve told as an inspiration for how we move forward, even as we let our listeners tell us where that place we’re moving to should look like. We incorporate our own dreams in this plan, plus the dreams of The Rhino’s community of artists, audiences, and supporters. With this data we seek to deepen our commitment to an inclusive, queer vision of the world as we fashion new ways to realize it. The theatrical event is always live and through it we can live in the present and blaze new ways into the space in front of us.

**Joe Tally, President of the Board**

“ Organizational staff often approach a strategic planning process with some trepidation. We are very well acquainted with the strengths and growing edges of the organization, and (we tell ourselves) we know what is best for its future. What we often forget is that we are so mired in day-to-day, show-to-show minutiae that we miss some opportunities, innovations, and surprising insights that come after pausing and stepping back. Given the opportunity to emerge from the worries of budgets, deadlines, and reports, we notice how the Theater is intersecting with the larger theatrical, cultural, and artistic communities of the Bay Area. This strategic plan is a result of a refreshing and reflective process with our Board, donors and audiences, artists, and fellow Bay Area theatre community. It invigorates and guides our steps in ways we, on our own, could not have dreamed or predicted. Now, watch us bring the strategic plan to fruition as we once again tackle the day-to-day, show-to-show, season-to-season mission of Theatre Rhinoceros.



**WHERE**



# WHERE WE ARE/

Since our last strategic planning process five years ago we have:

- \* Remained the longest-running LGBTQ+ theatre anywhere. Since 1977 we have provided queer entertainment for everyone.
- \* Presented at least three local premieres every season.
- \* Presented one to two world premieres every season.
- \* Focused more than half our programming on BIPOC issues.
- \* Out-produced every Bay Area Theatre during COVID-19 with over 100 on-line presentations.
- \* Hired a development director and increased our grant applications two-fold and our record of reward two-fold.
- \* Secured a stable location for a reasonable rent in the nation's premiere queer neighborhood, The Castro.
- \* Launched an ambitious play-reading series and presented at least one open to the public and free staged reading every month.
- \* Partnered with five new queer organizations.
- \* Diversified our board of directors.
- \* Co-Produced with three other arts organizations.
- \* Instituted new non-hierarchical play selection systems.
- \* Developed relationships with two local politicians/civic leaders.
- \* Incorporated new technologies into our productions.

# WE'VE BEEN



# AMBITIONS

## **PRODUCTION**

Deepen Theatre Rhinoceros's position as one of the nation's true standard bearers for new, provocative, topical work.

## **CAPACITY**

Increase our annual income and dispense it on further diversifying our staff and our productions as we enhance our facilities and our pay scales to encourage our artists and enrich our productions.

## **PLACE IN THE WORLD**

Engage and enrich our connections to the artists, audiences, and peoples we serve.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

Take our history of diversity, equality and excitement and extend it into the future with even greater emphasis on equity and entertainment.





# PRODUCTION

## OBJECTIVE

Take the lead as the region's premiere performance producer for the LGBTQ+ and adjacent/allied community by creating provocative shows that are intelligent, inclusive, and professional.

## GOALS

- \* Present new works by emerging and diverse voices at the same time as discover the now in our queer theatrical traditions.
- \* Bring a diversity of voices into our play finding and selection process.
- \* Celebrate our glorious artists with enhanced pay and enhanced production values.
- \* Foster new voices and present their works, as a way to celebrate our diverse and vibrant queer community.

## QUANTIFIERS

- \* Produce a season of six plays and musicals.
- \* Present one world premiere per season.
- \* Develop an artist-in-residence program.
- \* Develop a director-in-residence program.
- \* Solicit feedback from our artists and audiences on "their experience with us."

***"YOUR COVID-19 PLAYS SAVED MY LIFE."***

Richard K., Rhino Donor and Audience Member





# CAPACITY

## OBJECTIVE

Increase income and exposure to increase positioning and advance our artists, productions, physical plants, infrastructure, and outreach.

## GOALS

- \* Foster the strongest sense of inclusivity, equality and equity in our staff, board and artists to realize our greatest human capital and sustain the organization.
- \* Find a medium sized (100-150) seat home in The Castro that is both a welcoming, inclusive, environment and a spectacular theatrical space.
- \* Further diversify the board and staff.
- \* Increase the yield of The Rhino's foundation, corporate, individual, and planned giving platforms.
- \* Increase the reach of our marketing entities.

## QUANTIFIERS

- \* Redesign The Rhino's website and logo and track its hits as a way of determining its success.
- \* Follow the growth of Rhino's marketing outreach and determine its success as we adjust to feedback.
- \* Foster staff and artist development.
- \* Increase board membership, with an eye on diversity, from 8 to 12 members.
- \* Increase the yields of Rhino's income platforms by 33 percent.

***“I LOVE THE RHINO, AND I LOVE THAT THEY HAVE A HOME IN THE CASTRO.***

Henry R., Theatre Rhino Donor



# PLACE IN THE WORLD

## OBJECTIVE

Deepen our commitment and achievement as a theatre that fosters equality, equity, inclusion, respect, and excitement.

## GOALS

- \* Fulfill daily the commitments expressed in our values statement.
- \* Foster the up-coming group of liberal thinking and enlightened theatre makers and theatre goers.
- \* Be always creative and ground-breaking and push to achieve more in all realms of development.

## QUANTIFIERS

- \* Have an annual retreat where we revisit, reaffirm, reassess, and reanimate our goals and values.
- \* Deepen our commitment to diversity and inclusion in staff, board, and artists.
- \* Solicit feedback from staff, artists, audiences, and board to strengthen communication and inclusion.
- \* Solicit outside voices as a way of knowing where inclusion and the progressive future of our theatre reside.

***“I LOVE THE RHINO. THEY ARE MY FAMILY.”***

SuzyJane E., Rhino Artist





# PHILOSOPHY

## OBJECTIVE

Enhance our inclusive, exciting, fun, equality based organizational structure.

## GOALS

- \* Further diversify our staff, board, and artists.
- \* Foster emerging voices to secure their and our place in the future.
- \* Push ourselves to exceed our perceived limitations.

## QUANTIFIERS

- \* Hold an annual Board retreat to discuss progress, area for growth.
- \* Increase our staff as a way of providing more opportunities to a diversity of people.
- \* Encourage greater openness in discussions between staff and board, artists, and staff.
- \* Launch an audience and artist survey program.

***“YOUR SHOWS SPEAK TO ME IN A WAY THAT IS UNIQUE, LIKE NO ONE ELSE’S.”***

Bill B., Rhino Subscriber and Donor

# FINANCIALS



## **FUNDING SOURCES**

FY2019 (last pre-pandemic FY completed)

## **FIGURES**

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*PIE CHART TBD*

**SPENDING**

FY2019

**FIGURES**

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# IN CLOSING

## **“AN ADVENTURE”**

Theatre is the definition of community, as it both celebrates ourselves as a group of people and points a way to the future for that group. It is such a pleasure and honor to create theatre that it must come with enormous responsibility — a responsibility to the artists, the staff, the board, the audience, the supporters who make that pleasure possible. This strategic plan demonstrates our response ability, our ability to respond to ourselves, our supporters, and our community, a community that includes all in the LGBTQBIPOC+ world. In responding we hope to grow, both outwardly and inwardly, as a way of maintaining the superlative nature of The Rhino as a trailblazer.

**John Fisher**  
**Executive Artistic Director**



# THEATRE RHINOCEROS

Administration: P.O. Box 423496  
San Francisco, CA 94142  
Phone (415) 552-4100