



We are writing to you today with a direct action plea because **Magnetic North Theatre Festival faces a severe financial hurdle**. We are not kidding, and not exaggerating for effect. Tough times around the country make such pleas common, so we will speak directly throughout this letter without mincing words.

We had a great festival in Kitchener-Waterloo in June, but the festival hit upon a perfect storm that, despite the careful contingencies we have in place, resulted in a deficit. We must reduce our deficit by our September 30 year-end. We turn to you - who have already proven that you believe in the vision of a festival that brings theatre to every corner of this nation - for a demonstration of support.

We know it was a successful year because you told us so, and you told us so in droves. Darren O'Donnell of Mammalian Diving Reflex says: *"It was without a doubt, my best festival experience ever. ... locating it in somewhere like KW, a city that is close enough to a large centre to have lots of traffic but still far enough away to create a sense of community amongst those of us who were staying there for the duration was, in the end, a great thing... seriously, after 10 years of touring, it was the best festival experience ever!"*

This was a year in which moving a festival from one city to another - the vision that lies at the heart of Magnetic North - presented a number of challenges that resulted in an over-extension of our resources. Box office was significantly lower than even our conservative projections and corporate bookings from Canada's high-tech heartland failed to materialize. Even a visit by the Governor General of Canada failed to boost the box office. Moreover, costs associated with presenting the work in unfamiliar venues were significantly higher than even our contingency plans allowed.

We know it would make more economic sense to keep the festival in one city: or to rotate only between the country's largest centres. However, such a choice would fly in the face of a festival that strives to bring together people from across the nation to revel in each other's likenesses and differences, their histories, dreamed futures and shared stories. During our 2009 Focus Groups held across the country, you - the Canadian theatre community made up of artists and audiences alike - told us as emphatically as Darren has above, that you wanted a Magnetic North that brought Canadian theatre to all corners of the country.

The fact that we have encountered challenges associated with fulfilling our mandate *does not mean our mandate is wrong*. It means we need your help.

We are asking for a demonstration of support from our supporters to allow the festival to regain its financial footing before our year-end of September 30. We need 250 people to donate \$300 but any amount will help and is welcome: be it \$50 or \$100, please give within your means. The importance is in the gesture, allowing us to show a broad base of support from across the country. **You may donate by credit card simply by clicking on the "Canada Helps" button at the end of this email or you can download our donor form on our website at [www.magneticnorthfestival.ca](http://www.magneticnorthfestival.ca) to pay by cheque.**

The festival has presented over 70 productions to more than 70,000 people. Over 1000 artists have been on the national stage and many more have participated in the Industry Series and have garnered a national or international tour as a result. If each of those whom the festival has served believe enough in this vision to come to its rescue in its hour of need, then we can succeed.

We hope you will help begin the groundswell of support that we so urgently need.

Yours,

**DALE TURRI**  
Chair, Board of Directors

**KEN CAMERON**  
Artistic Director

**ANN CONNORS**  
Managing Director

