



January 22, 2024

City of London Budget Committee
Attention Elizabeth Pelosa, Chair.
The City of London
300 Dufferin Avenue
London, ON
N6B 1Z2

Re: In Support of the Grand Theatre's Business Case

Dear Madame Chair:

The ***London Black History Coordinating Committee*** was formed out of a desire to increase awareness of Black History and Heritage, and Black History Month activities in the London area and to highlight the contributions of London's diverse Black community. LBHCC is dedicated to providing educational programs, activities and services that increase public understanding and awareness of the diversity and history of London's Black community.

2024 marks the 22nd anniversary of our committee; during this time, the LBHCC has organized events and has been the 'clearing house' for events organized by other groups from the London/Middlesex Community. As a volunteer led and run organization, LBHCC partners with others to present and deliver programs not only during February/Black History Month but in other times of the year.

For over ten years, LBHCC has partnered with the Grand Theatre to improve access to the Theatre to the Black community, and other racialized groups. This partnership was developed as a way for our Committee to not only educate the community about Black actors and playwrights, but to also increase the attendance of members of the community to the Theatre, and to broaden their response and understanding of the arts, especially in themes that reflect the Black experience.

On a personal level, I have attended more than ten years of performances and ‘opening nights’ performances at the Grand Theatre. I find the Grand to have responded positively to the work of LBHCC and has become a more welcoming and emotional experience for all those involved. When I attend the Theatre, I am moved by not only great performances but by seeing diverse groups of patrons at the Grand. I am very committed to the Grand and I have recently become a member of the Board of Directors as a strong demonstrating of my commitment, helping the Grand Theatre in creating a strategic plan that will move it to the future; and with our new Artistic Director and Executive Director, we know we are on the right track and we hope that the City of London will continue to be a key partner in our lifecycle and our future.

The Grand’s economic impact to the downtown as an anchor attraction, bringing close to 100,000 people to the core annually and inspiring millions in economic spinoff; as one of our City’s main anchor cultural institutions, fostering the professional and community arts, reflecting our commitment to *World Curious, London Proud*; our impact to local London youth - through programs like our *High School Project*, student matinees, and the 100 Schools Project – that brings professional theatre to all areas of London, and a program that we hope to bring back in future years, is key to the role of the Grand theatre in our City.

On behalf of the LBHCC, our members and volunteers and the Black community, we hope you will support this request for an increase of a financial investment in our Grand Theatre.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carl Cadogan', written in a cursive style.

Carl Cadogan, Chair
London Black History Coordinating Committee
C/O London Cross Cultural Learner Centre
505 Dundas Street
London, Ontario
N6B 1W4