

January 23, 2024

City of London
300 Dufferin Ave
London, ON N6B 1Z2

Attention: Elizabeth Pelozza, Chair, City of London Budget Committee

Re: In Support of the Grand Theatre's Business Case (P39, Page 571)

Dear Elizabeth,

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter, and for the role that you are undertaking as the Chair of the City of London Budget Committee.

I am writing to enthusiastically advocate for the Business Case presented by the Grand Theatre as part of the City's multi-year budget process.

I am a second-generation Canadian, whose grandparents immigrated from Greece to Canada, and settled in London, Ontario in the mid 1950s. As I was growing up in this city, I showed a strong affinity for the arts (dance, music, theatre) and ultimately pursued arts and culture administration as my chosen career path, which included 3 years with the City of London Culture Office, and 3 years out-of-province working for a global entertainment brand. However, my career began at the Grand Theatre, and it is the Grand Theatre that drew me back home to London so that I could undertake my current role as its Director of Marketing and Digital Strategy. The Grand Theatre informed every step of my growth and development as a culture sector professional, and for that I am incredibly grateful.

I would like to also highlight how the Grand Theatre's presence in my life provided an avenue for my immigrant grandparents, and first generation Canadian parents to incorporate the live performing arts into their existence, realizing that the Grand Theatre is an accessible, diverse, and incredibly engaging community hub, for all Londoners. This very theatre became a keystone for them to begin exploring the many arts and culture offerings within this city, ultimately contributing various priorities, including the revitalization of the Downtown Core, engaging with community initiatives, and furthering the case for London as a tourism destination in Southwestern Ontario.

To me, the Grand Theatre is a vital organization, a jewel of the City of London, a clear case for plotting London as a point of interest on national and global maps, and deserves serious consideration within the City of London's budgeting discourse.

With thanks,

Lia Karidas (Ward 13, grew up in Ward 11)