



PORTE
PAROLE

ANNUAL

ANNUAL
REPORT

2023 — 2024

REPORT

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and Executive Directors

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A WORD FROM THE ARTISTIC AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

Annabel Soutar
and **Amandine Gauthier**

As we look back over the past year, we are filled with tremendous pride and exhilaration. Despite the complex economic and social challenges facing the performing arts, this vibrant season kept the heart of Porte Parole beating with strength and purpose. Faced with an increasingly challenging world, we chose to respond with boundless creativity and a renewed passion for our unique form of documentary theater. Each project we undertook was powered by a bold vision and a deep commitment, all fueled by our determination to touch hearts and spark meaningful conversations about our society.

We created, produced, co-presented, measured, developed, and supported several projects that will leave a lasting mark. From our very first collaboration with the Théâtre du Nouveau Monde on the major production *Projet Polytechnique*, which struck a profound chord with our audience, to the English translation of *Rose et la machine*, *Rose in the Machine*, which led to our first collaboration with the National Arts Centre's French- and English-language theaters at the same time, we have nurtured rich artistic partnerships. The subsequent tours of these two productions allowed our projects to inform, move, and inspire audiences far beyond the Greater Montreal region.

Our Documentary Hub project keeps thriving, evolving into a platform for collaboration and ideation, a space where the future of our practice is boldly taking shape. Following a highly successful second edition, the Porte Parole Pitch is now recognized as a key incubator of documentary talent and a much-anticipated annual event. The Vox Pop project, a true reflection of today's diverse voices, has deepened our reflection and enriched our vision for future creations.

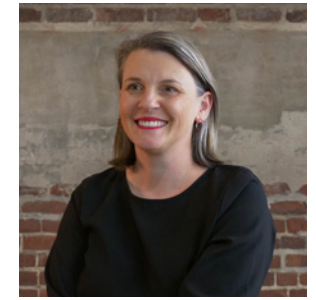


Photo credit
Jean-Christophe Zephir

This year, we also launched a new format for our acclaimed *The Assembly* series, conceived especially for corporate contexts and institutions. The *Assembly – Energy in Canada* was performed in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal in various settings, from seminars and conferences to private functions. The initiative aims to offer groups concerned about the polarization surrounding Canada's energy transition a creative approach to fostering productive dialogue between individuals from different sides of the issue.

Beyond these tangible achievements, it is the impact of our work that inspires us most. This year more than ever, we have taken a concrete measure of the reach of our actions, cementing our belief in the undeniable necessity of pursuing our mission.

Moreover, given the current circumstances, we've been actively working to diversify our revenue streams, and to reach new audiences beyond the context of the theater. Our business plan is currently being reimaged, with new initiatives underway to connect with diverse communities across the board.

We owe the success of this season to you: donors, partners and, of course, colleagues, volunteers and devoted collaborators. Your support empowers us to dream bigger, to create bolder, and to keep writing the Porte Parole story together. Standing side by side, we will rise to meet the challenges ahead.

With our deepest gratitude,

– **Annabel Soutar and Amandine Gauthier**

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT



Matthieu Sauvé M.A., ARP, FSCR

As the 2023-24 financial year draws to a close, it is clear that the company's momentum, which began to pick up again in 2022-23, has shown no signs of slowing.

On one hand, Porte Parole has continued to offer its audiences creations of undeniable relevance, resonating with critical societal issues. Notable examples include *Projet Polytechnique* and *Rose et la machine*. We have every reason to believe that *L'Assemblée – Québec*, *The Assembly – Energy in Canada*, and two new works currently in development exploring medical assistance in dying and Canada's energy transition will resonate just as strongly.

Reflecting the company's commitment to sharing our expertise in documentary theatre with the broader community, the Documentary Hub - a platform designed to support and encourage creative initiatives in the community - brilliantly celebrated its second year by welcoming five new creations.

This momentum, as detailed in the pages ahead, requires strong support, especially in terms of financial resources. To that end, several members of our team - board and team members, respected collaborators - have come together to develop a bold philanthropic development strategy, the implementation of which is already underway. I want to take this opportunity to thank them for their commitment and support.

Launched as Porte Parole approaches its 25th anniversary, this strategy is designed to ensure the company's long-term sustainability while expanding our creative and production horizons in the years to come.

No effort was spared in the pursuit of these goals. Alongside our philanthropic work, we've adopted a new policy to guide our relationships with future

partners, updated our internal policies, and introduced a *Workplace Well-Being Policy*. We've also conducted a thorough review of our board of directors, including its composition and committee structure. On that note, I'm delighted to welcome Jonathan Carrier, CPA, Director of Finance at Siemens Mobility, to our board. Jonathan will also join the Finance, Audit, and Risk Management Committee, where his expertise will be invaluable.

Of course, it's impossible not to pause and reflect on the loss of Line Noël, our beloved producer, who passed away far too soon last December. A consummate professional admired throughout the theatre community, Line was also a warm and cherished colleague. Her absence has been deeply felt.

Finally, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who makes Porte Parole's work possible: our board, staff, volunteers, partners, and donors. Most importantly, I thank our audiences, whose engagement and support fuel everything we do.

As the great actor, artist, and director Louis Jovet once said, "A play is a conversation." Thank you for being part of ours.

ABOUT

ABOUT

Porte Parole was born during the 1998 election campaign, the first one following the 1995 referendum. The media spoke of it as a turning point in Québec history, but Annabel Soutar and Alex Ivanovici rather felt a fatigue and lack of interest within the population. They decided to investigate. Armed with recording devices, they travelled across Québec to ask citizens if Jean Charest and Lucien Bouchard's speeches actually reflected their concerns.

A bit over a year and hundreds of interviews later, Porte Parole's first play, *Novembre*, presented Quebeckers of all walks of life expressing their expectations of the government and the future of our society.

Since then, Porte Parole's mission has always been to make theatre a public space devoted to democratic dialogue and the promotion of civic engagement. Whether the topic is racism, climate change, health, neurodiversity or hydroelectric development, its preferred tool is documentary theatre. But for several years now, Porte Parole has been exploring other formats and experiences (podcasts, videos, online events) to extend its mission beyond theatre-goers.

ABOUT



Photo credit
Yves Renaud

OUR PLAYS

OUR PLAYS

OUR PLAYS

By the numbers

→ **46 performances** in **19 cities**

→ **24,716 audience members**, including 541 high school, CEGEP, and university students

→ **22 artistes and creators**

ON THE STAGE

OUR PLAYS

PROJET POLYTECHNIQUE

Text and Original Concept

Marie-Joanne Boucher and **Jean-Marc Dalphond**

Director

Marie-Josée Bastien

Dramaturgy and collaboration on the text

Annabel Soutar and **Alex Ivanovici**

Projet Polytechnique delves into the causes and consequences of the 1989 Polytechnique femicide, tackling themes of violence against women and gun control. This powerful and unflinching play amplifies the voices of survivors, victims' families, and experts, while also engaging with opposing perspectives, offering a deeper understanding of how this tragic event shaped Quebec society and feminist movements.

AUDIENCE VOICES

“Thank you from the bottom of my heart for this magnificent work. Not only is it a vital act of remembrance, but it also serves as a powerful tool for healing.”

“This project is undeniably challenging, and that is precisely what makes it so essential. Thank you for this moment and for all the reflections and actions it will inspire in my life.” — Marie-Hélène Forget

“Profoundly relevant. Thank you for the courage to present a stripped-back performance that cuts straight to the heart of the matter.”

OUR PLAYS

ROSE IN THE MACHINE

Text

Maude Laurendeau

Director

Édith Patenaude

Dramaturge and translator

Annabel Soutar

Maude's daughter has an autism spectrum disorder. Seeking to understand and support her daughter, Maude quickly realizes that there are tremendous difficulties ahead. As she documents the weaknesses of our healthcare system and the flaws in our education system, Maude gradually discovers her own limitations. Can she listen to and understand her daughter? Can she help her without stigmatizing her otherness? And can she learn from that difference?

AUDIENCE VOICES

“An emotional, honest, intelligent, and well-researched testimony. This kind of play helps us grow.”

“As a mother of a child with ASD, [...] you've inspired me to take action and try to bring about change.” – Carole Tineo

“This play was powerful, moving, and remarkable [...] you are doing meaningful work and once again proving the importance of art and culture.”

By the numbers

- 12 performances in English and French in 10 cities
- 6190 audience members
- 13 artists and creators



OUR PLAYS

THE ASSEMBLY ENERGY IN CANADA

Concept and text

Alex Ivanovici, Annabel Soutar and Brett Watson

Director

Chris Abraham

Building on the success of its original concept, *The Assembly*, Porte Parole is broadening its scope by tailoring its innovative approach to suit the needs of corporate and community events. As society faces urgent social and environmental challenges, the business world is increasingly divided by ideological rifts that stall meaningful action.

This *Assembly* brings together four citizens with starkly opposing views on Canada's energy transition. Their perspectives, portrayed verbatim by professional actors, unfold in a theatrical space reimagined as a modern agora, where audiences are invited to engage and add their voices to the conversation.

THE ASSEMBLY

OUR PLAYS

CLUB SANDWICH MAYONNAISE

Text

Manuelle Légaré

Director

Pascale Renaud-Hébert

Dramaturge

Mathieu Gosselin

On October 5, 2021, Manuelle Légaré was by her father Pierre Légaré's side as he passed away. The comedian had chosen medical assistance in dying. A decade after its legalization, Quebec has become the place where this practice is most widely used in the world. As she reflects on the growing acceptance of this medical option, Manuelle Légaré wrestles with reconciling the quiet simplicity of her father's final moments with the vast emptiness left by his absence.

Now that we can know the date and time of our passing, how will medical assistance in dying redefine our relationship with death?





Photo credit
Najim Chaoui

PROJETS

PROJECTS

PRO-JECTS

HUB DOC



THE PORTE PAROLE PITCH

Five pre-selected participants receive coaching and mentorship from Porte Parole to develop a documentary theatre pitch, which they perform on stage before a jury and audience on the evening of the *Porte Parole Pitch*. The winning project is awarded a \$10,000 grant, generously offered by the founding members of the Documentary Hub, to further its development.

This year, we were proud to host the second edition of *Porte Parole Pitch*. We selected five projects from the many submissions received.

- **Jesse Freeston – That Which Cannot Be Split**
Mentor: Brett Watson
- **Alexia Vinci – Gespeg**
Mentor: Agathe Foucault
- **Jessica Beauplat – J’ai mal à mon école**
Mentor: Maude Laurendeau
- **Nadia Girard Eddahia – Jouer, une incursion dans les jeux de l’amour et du hasard de Loto-Québec**
Mentor: Justin Laramée
- **Kevin T. Landry – Les racines croches**
Mentor: François Grisé

This year, Jesse Freeston earned both the Founders’ Prize and the Audience Award for *That Which Cannot Be Split*. His was the first English-language project in the history of the *Porte Parole Pitch*.

DIGITAL PROJECTS

ONLINE & IN SITU



VOX POP

The mission of Vox Pop is to enable citizens to respond and engage with stimulating questions, record and share their views on subjects raised in Porte Parole’s documentary plays.

VOX POP AND PROJET POLYTECHNIQUE

The creators of Projet polytechnique invited the audience to share their thoughts and memories surrounding the feminicide of December 6th, 1989 at the École Polytechnique in Montréal by responding to the following question:

Should we continue to reflect on the events of December 6th, 1989, more than 30 years later?

TESTIMONIES

“I remember very clearly where I was in 1989, as an engineer myself, a graduate of Polytechnique, having studied in the very same classrooms. What a shock it was to see, and to vividly imagine, where that massacre took place. All of this happened simply because women chose to study in a field they loved, one in which they excelled, and yet faced such devastating discrimination.”

“We must remember this tragedy to ensure it never happens again, to help society move forward in the right direction. And simply because it was a tragedy—remembering it, I think, is a way of beginning to heal this enormous wound.”

PODCAST WHY CAN'T WE BE FRIENDS?

IN DEVELOPMENT



Drawing on her extensive experience in documentary theatre since 2000, Annabel Soutar, artistic director of Porte Parole and playwright, presents a series of discussions with Canadian experts on the polarizing issue of the energy transition in Canada.

The series aims to create a “listening chain” among experts with strong and opposing views on the question: “Given the urgent need to act on energy transition, how can we proceed in a healthy and effective way?”

The focus will be on each guest’s ability to remain open to opposing perspectives and to foster a deeper understanding of the reasons the debate around energy transition in Canada has become so stalled—and, as a result, why efforts to accelerate the transition are often derailed.

OUR IMPACT

SOCIAL IMPACT

Porte Parole has taken the time to assess the impact of its productions, revealing their ability to spark meaningful public debates and actively engage citizens on critical issues. Through this evaluation, we've observed that our performances do more than tell stories: they bring together diverse audiences, build bridges between experts and citizens, and foster a deeper understanding of complex societal challenges. This process has allowed us to refine our artistic approach, strengthen our role as facilitators of education and awareness, and maximize our contribution to an informed civic dialogue.

Finally, our artists have participated as experts in numerous classrooms, symposiums, and conferences, contributing to various social discussions.

OUR IMPACT PARTNERS 2023-2024

- **Léger Marketing**
Creation of surveys tailored to our audiences
- **UNESCO Chair for the Prevention of Radicalization**
Survey and focus groups to analyze the impact of *Projet Polytechnique* on radicalization prevention
- **Re-AK**
An innovative technological study specializing in the analysis of human emotions through biometric data, which was used to examine the emotional responses of *Projet Polytechnique* audiences

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

As a space for civic engagement, we have launched an environmental innovation initiative! With a first eco-responsible strategy that is both concrete and ambitious, we've demonstrated our commitment to fostering democratic dialogue about respecting what our planet can bear. From the responsible management of our activities to the eco-conscious design of our productions, as well as strict procurement and manufacturing criteria, we are dedicated to making theatre a driver of positive change for both society and the environment.

AT A GLANCE

- 100% eco-responsible management of our activities
- Artistic direction deeply rooted in a holistic ecological vision (several projects centered on the theme of eco-responsibility)
- First 99% eco-responsible production (*Projet Polytechnique*)
- Involvement of all stakeholders

Nomination – **Prix Vivats – Art et audace**
from the **Conseil des arts de Montréal**

ANALYSIS OF THE 2022–2023 FINANCIAL SITUATION

In 2023-2024, the pandemic's impact on audiences' behaviour remained obvious. Like many in the arts sector, we faced challenges filling venues, which impacted our ticket-sharing revenue.

However, we did receive several grants to support specific projects, including the finishing stages of the creation and the production of *Projet Polytechnique*, the *Projet Polytechnique* and *Rose et la machine* tours, the Documentary Hub (including the second edition of the Porte Parole Pitch) and our digital explorations.

This year also saw a substantial growth of our philanthropic revenues, with an increase of **40%** compared to 2022-23. With the addition of 73 new donors and the ongoing support of 131 loyal donors, we raised a total of **\$437,376**, attesting to our community's strong engagement with our projects.

This year, our revenues reached **\$1,996,032**, but our expenses showed a slightly higher increase. We ended the year with a deficit equivalent to 9% of the total budget.

This rise in expenses is largely due to an ambitious production schedule, including the premiere of *Projet Polytechnique*, a project five years in the making. Some urgent and unforeseen expenses also contributed to this deficit. We close the fiscal year with a surplus of \$59,378, which allows us to approach the coming year with confidence, while maintaining a cautious approach to future budgeting.

Below are the key highlights. For more details, we invite you to review our financial statements.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Annual deficit of revenues over expenses: **\$198,645**
- Total net assets: **\$59,378**
- **40%** increase in philanthropic revenues

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2023-2024

Matthieu Sauvé President
François Prénovost Treasurer
Fortunat Nadima Nadima Secretary

Administrators

Jonathan Carrier
Mary-Dailey Desmarais
Anne Emanuelli
Lili de Grandpré
Alex Ivanovici
Mathieu Johnson
François Le Moine
Julie Pilon
Annabel Soutar

TEAM 2023-2024

Annabel Soutar Co-Founder and Artistic Director
Alex Ivanovici Co-Founder and Artistic Associate
Amandine Gauthier Executive Director
Merissa Tordjman Director of Production
Normand Vincent Technical Director
Maxime Bertrand Director, Philanthropic Development
Saskia Rolland-Bezem Operations Manager
Sara Karel Chiasson Documentary Hub Coordinator
Anne-Sophie Ducloux Communications and Marketing Manager
Béatrice Flynn Social Media & Communications Coordinator
Clara Pierre Operations Coordinator
Sandy Caron Production Manager
Laurent Forget Assistant to the Artistic Director
Alexis Bouchard Intern
Patrick Leduc Encore Spectacle (Canada)
Victor Leclère Touring Agent (Europe)
Paule Maher Touring Agent (Québec)

LINE NOËL (1965-2023), PRODUCER

It is with great emotion that we pay tribute to Line Noël, who left an indelible mark on the history of Porte Parole through her talent, humanity, and generosity. Since joining our team as a producer in 2019, Line was more than an exceptional collaborator—she was a unifying force, bringing people together with her humor, enthusiasm, and unwavering dedication. She will remain deeply cherished in our hearts and memories.

THANK YOU

THANK YOU

**TO ALL THE GRANTING AGENCIES,
FOUNDATIONS AND PRIVATE BUSINESSES
THAT SUPPORT PORTE PAROLE**

Granting Agencies

Canada Council for the Arts
Conseil des arts et des lettres
du Québec
Conseil des arts de Montréal

Businesses

Atelier Bouffe, Sutton
Belhumeur Stratégies d'affaires
Diagram
ELENICO Consulting Group
Germain Hotels
O'Shaughnessy Financial
Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec
Picbois Productions
Power Corporation of Canada
Urbania

Private Foundations

Morris & Rosalind Goodman Family
Foundation
R. Howard Webster Foundation
Zeller Family Foundation
Fondation Henrichon-Goulet
The Hylcan Foundation
J. Armand Bombardier Foundation
McCall MacBain Foundation
Rossy Foundation
Fonds Famille Pineau

THANK YOU

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR DONORS

Anonymous (34)
Anonyme
(in memory of Pierre & Réjane Vincent)
Alain Boulet
Alex Ivanovici
Alexandra Bonnefoy
Alexandra Bromac
Alexandra MacBain
Alexis Bouchard
Alyson Wood
Amandine Gauthier
Amélie Duceppe
Anna Chif & François Lafortune
Anne Vanhaeverbeke
Anne-Lise Koessler
Annie Tourangeau
Bernard Arseneau
Boody
Brenlee Robinson
Caitlin Rose
Caroline Bergeron
Caroline Miller
Catherine Ouellet Dupuis
Catherine Piazzon
Chloé B. Fortin
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(in memory of Ian Soutar)
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Cynthia & John Dinsmore
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Danis Gagné
David James & Lili de Grandpré
David S. Bennahum
Delia Cristea
Diane Poliquin
Dominique Vallerand

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Marnie Blanshay
Marthe Lemery
Mary Gallery
Mary-Dailey Desmarais
Mathieu Johnson
Matthieu Sauvé
Mériol Lehmann
Michel Houle
Michel Kelly-Gagnon
Michèle Frémont
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Mira Cliche
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Morgane Lecocq-Lemieux
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Natasha Bergeron
Nathalie Bissonnette
Nathalie Joannis
Nathalie Marcoux
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(in memory of Jasmine)

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W. David Angus
Zoé Latraverse

