Recovery... or Transformation?

National Alliance of Musical Theatres
Fall Conference Plenary
November 17, 2020
Land Acknowledgement

We share this with you from Pequonnock, Paugussett, and Wappinger land (now Fairfield and New Haven)
Performing arts venues – “first to close, last to (fully) reopen”
Steven Wolff, Principal

Susanna Gellert, Executive Artistic Director
Eric Keen Louie, Producing Director
Paul Stancato, Artistic Director

Meg Friedman, Senior Consultant
When the tide goes out, you see the rocks that were already there
What does this mean for us?
Audience loyalty is consistent. Digital delivery and health and safety will stay a part of the mix.

~80% say they will attend the same amount as before

Many health factors – from HVAC updates to cleaning protocols – are encouraged.

~20% want a permanent livestreaming option, though only a small percentage would pay full price for it.
What aspect of your theater needs to change most, in response to the current time? (n=79+)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>5-Major change</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3-Some change</th>
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Do you/your colleagues know what you need to know in order to make that change? (n=76+)

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<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>1-Lots of info needed</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3-Know some, need some</th>
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Expect more change

A survey of NAMT members asked what needs to change and whether organizations have the information they need to make the contemplated changes.

You said that **knowledge needs are focused on audiences** – connecting, cultivating, and serving them.

**Operational change is in the ‘muddy middle’**, with some change anticipated and some knowledge deficits.

We have to call the question – **doesn’t governance and personnel need to change as well?**
We focus on things we can control, while welcoming (or accepting) the things we can’t control.
The events of 2020 have accelerated changes that were already underway.

- Adoption of technology
- Consumer behavior
- Business collaborations
- Economic disparities
- Social and racial justice
- Redefining ‘place’
Ten years in ten months.
THE LONG RUNWAY

Readiness to Return

A lot of ‘moving parts’ have to align

- Industry
- Audience
- Institution
- Community health
Recovery... or Transformation?
What are the risks?

- Changed habits / Competition
- Capitalization
- Financial operations
- Alignment
- Artistic risk
- Fatigue
The future will call for change
Our assets have defined us

- In-person, real time
- Iconic venues
- Ticket sales-driven
- Dependent on ‘popular’ titles
- ‘Producing’ is vertically integrated
- Proscenium and thrust stages
- Limited amenities
## SWOT

### Current Conditions reveal much

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
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<td>Scale, visibility &amp; resources</td>
<td>Content dependent, diversity, capital</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunities</td>
<td>Threats/Challenges</td>
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<td>Partnerships, local content, leadership</td>
<td>“The way it was...”</td>
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Where we were before

BEFORE

Activity

Distribution

Production
NOW: Temporary or Permanent?

What does this mean for our venues?
A network – broader and more deeply connected to community.
How might the business change?
Panel Discussion
Q&A
Wrap-up
Take-aways

- Communication improvements
  - Internally
  - With audiences
  - Among communities

- An accountable commitment to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility and Justice

- Extended / Expanded collaboration
  - Different kinds of delivery
  - Content innovation

- Leveraging digital but not relying on it

- Appreciating small successes
Resilience

• Stay engaged and connected.
• Focus on purpose.
• Challenge assumptions.

Readiness

• Build on engagement
• Gather data
• explore new scenarios

Reimagination

• Design and implement a different future.

Recapitalization

• New value proposition
• New business models
• New partnerships.

Return

• Scale up
• Meet our communities where they are
• Over time.
“... the first casualty of a crisis is imagination. But those that shape and benefit from the future will be those that can imagine it.”

Martin Reeves, Boston Consulting Group, April 2020