

The world is changing and needs to change.

Fast-moving events in our society are creating an opportunity – a necessity – for Persephone Theatre to be a part of writing a new chapter, and to change with a hopefully improving world. It is in that interest that I have decided to step aside as Artistic Director to make way for new leadership.

This decision was made last week, and my rationale has only been reinforced with each passing day since then. Change is needed at Persephone, and for that change to have real meaning, it has to begin at the highest leadership level of the theatre.

We know that our organization has much work to do in appropriately supporting, respecting, and amplifying the voices of our Indigenous artists, Black artists, and artists of colour. As the artistic leader I am responsible for these shortcomings. Now, given the urgency of this moment in our society, it's clear that the best thing I can do to help Persephone move forward is to step aside and make room. I welcome the coming change, but I am not the right person to make it happen. I am doing my own work and self-assessment, and look forward to seeing how Persephone will evolve.

The Board of Directors and I have agreed that I will stay in my position until June 22, to help with an orderly transition.

To be Persephone's Artistic Director has been my great honour for nearly 13 years. Thank you to Tibor Feheregyhazi, my predecessor, for pushing me to apply for the job all those years ago. Thank you to our Board for your deep commitment to Persephone. I am deeply grateful to have worked with so many talented, passionate, and committed theatre makers, whose work continues to inspire me to this day. I had the pleasure of watching you do some of the best work of your careers, and your achievements were at the heart of what are, to me, some of my finest contributions to theatre. To the people of Saskatoon, your support, generosity, and curiosity of mind – these have been deeply appreciated. You are the reason for all that we do.

When you are all able to gather in the theatre again, I know that it will be with a renewed sense of hope and excitement for what the new artistic leadership will have in store for you.

Del Surjik