

Artistic Statement

At the beginning of Shakespeare's Henry V, when the Chorus cries out "O for a Muse of fire!" and begs for "A kingdom for a stage, princes to act and monarchs to behold the swelling scene", he is repeating that age old cry of Artistic Directors everywhere, "If I only had a bigger budget!" With nothing more than an "unworthy scaffold" of a stage and a group of "flat unraised spirits" as performers he is left standing center stage, hat in hand, pleading with the audience to pitch in. "Let us...on your imaginary forces work" he begs. "Suppose within the girdle of these walls / Are now confined two mighty monarchies...", "Into a thousand parts divide one man..." "Think when we talk of horses, that you see them / Printing their proud hoofs in the receiving earth", and he goes on to explain why. He claims, "For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings, / Carry them here and there; jumping o'er times, / Turning the accomplishment of many years / Into an hour-glass." Please, he says, lend us your imagination and we will return to you the whole world inside this "wooden O"

That is the compact the theatre has with its audience. Show up, bring only yourselves and your imaginative capacities and we will tell you stories. Stories far-flung or nearby. Stories that will entertain, enliven, engage. Stories that will edify, contradict, challenge. Stories that will move you, unnerve you, disgust you. Stories that are our legacy, our cultural heritage, our best efforts at giving meaning to the lives we lead. "Imagination is more important than knowledge", said Albert Einstein. The capacity to imagine, uniquely human, must be nurtured and celebrated. Theatre is a powerful instrument in that endeavor. In the Theatre we can continually experience the power of that most improbable moment, when gathered spectators, sometimes in the thousands, turn their collective attention to the stage, willfully engaging suspension of disbelief, yielding up their imaginative powers to the trickster, the shaman, the actor. Why do we do it? Because as human beings we have the capacity, because of all the creatures of the earth, we can.