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### The Government of Ontario Pledges \$13.8 Million in Support of Young People's Theatre (YPT) and *Room for Imagination*

TORONTO, ON – The Honourable **Daiene Vernile, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport** announced last night that the Ontario Government will be contributing \$13.8 million over three years to support *Room for Imagination*, YPT's plan for a new facility. This commitment was made at *Imaginarium*, the company's signature annual event.

*"Our government is committed to keeping Ontario's culture sector growing so that vibrant arts organizations like Young People's Theatre can continue to flourish. Our arts and culture scene not only brings communities together but also continues to be a key driver of economic growth and prosperity. Our funding commitment will build on that growth by keeping cultural stalwarts like YPT vibrant so that everyone can take in the wonderful work that they do."*

- The Honourable **Daiene Vernile**

#### ROOM FOR IMAGINATION

Young People's Theatre is embarking upon *Room for Imagination* – a \$42 million comprehensive campaign to build a new home for the distinguished cultural institution. YPT's 85,000+ audience is representative of both schools and families from across Ontario. Family patrons are typically from Southern Ontario (with Kitchener-Waterloo the fastest growing segment), and student performances and educational workshops attract schools from as far away as Orillia, Kingston, Petawawa, Shawanaga First Nations, and North Bay.

Young People's Theatre has been operating for the last four decades in a re-purposed Heritage building owned by the City of Toronto. Today, the Company is bursting at the seams within this facility. For many years YPT has found it necessary to rent additional space. YPT's arts education programmes and Drama School (which operates in four locations) are rapidly expanding and increasingly sought after. Its production shops are too crowded to accommodate YPT's teaching workshops. Updates will also allow YPT to more efficiently build sets, costumes, and props for other professional theatre companies from across Ontario. Most importantly, the company has too few seats in its theatres to satisfy demand.

It is time to create a child-friendly, state of the art facility to ensure long-term sustainability for an already financially-successful children's charity.

YPT Executive Director Nancy Webster responds, *"We are deeply grateful for the government's commitment to YPT's continued growth. The company is ready for the challenge of Room for Imagination. YPT has increased its private sector funding, grown its box office revenue and further expanded its educational activities. In 2016/17 the company played to audiences at 90% of capacity; the accumulated surplus has risen to 14% of the annual budget; and YPT's operating budget has increased by 60% in five years, now reaching over \$5 million."*

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#### ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE'S THEATRE

Young People's Theatre is the oldest professional theatre company in Toronto and is a national producer and presenter of theatre for young audiences – the first and largest of its kind in Canada. Over the past 52 years YPT has staged many of the most important plays that form the canon of work for youth in our country. The enriched learning experiences of YPT's Education & Participation Department also provide young people with opportunities to develop their whole being. At Young People's Theatre we strive for a positive and lasting impact on the emotional, social, and intellectual development of young people – giving them the chance to grow into the unique and wonderful people they were born to be.

[Photos](#): login **yptmedia** | password **yptphotos**

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