



Larry Desrochers

Distinguished Alumnus

From behind the scenes and through a wide range of arts organizations, Desrochers has helped to build and sustain Winnipeg's vibrant cultural community.

Desrochers graduated from The University of Winnipeg in 1984 with a major in Theatre and Drama. As a student, Desrochers was an avid participant on a steering committee that made recommendations on key program decisions within the Department of Theatre and Drama.

While still a student, Desrochers' artistic talents were recognized by the Manitoba Theatre Centre. They invited him serve as an Assistant Director on the Mainstage. After graduating, he quickly began directing small local productions before directing his first MTC Warehouse production at the age of 26. A year later, MTC then asked him to establish the Winnipeg Fringe Festival, described as one of the most important events in Manitoba theatre history.

As Associate Director of MTC, Desrochers directed a number of productions including *Salt Water Moon*, *Burn This*, *M Butterfly*, and Maureen Hunter's play *Transit of Venus*, the first play by a local playwright to be presented at the MTC Mainstage in 27 years. He has also directed works for Prairie Theatre Exchange and Manitoba Opera.

In 1999, Desrochers produced and directed the opening and closing ceremonies of the Pan American Games, held in Winnipeg, involving over 5,000 performers.

He has also shown exceptional leadership as an arts administrator. The Winnipeg Fringe Festival holds the record as having the most successful inaugural year of any Fringe in Canada. While Executive Director of the Winnipeg Film Group, Desrochers revitalized programing and virtually eliminated the organization's accumulated debt. In his current position as Director of Manitoba Opera, he is leading the company through an organizational renewal that has resulted in balanced budgets, increased profile, and flourishing attendance at productions.

To celebrate Larry Desrochers' contributions to the cultural well-being of the local community, The University of Winnipeg Alumni Association is proud and honoured to name Larry Desrochers, Class of '84, as a Distinguished Alumnus.