

BOEHRINGER INGELHEIM

Innovation and a sense of community
is this company's secret to success

By Deborah Everest-Hill
Photography by Daniel Banko

Just off the QEW, between Appleby Line and Burloak Drive, there's a seemingly inconspicuous building with three flags gracing its entrance. At first glance, it may seem like a typical office building occupied by numerous individuals putting in a day's work, but it's more than that.

Boehringer Ingelheim (Canada) Ltd. is not only part of one of the top pharmaceutical companies in the world, it's a company that values innovation, embraces change and believes in giving back to the community. "We sell products that promote physical wellness," says president Ian Mills. "Improving the quality of life in the community is a natural extension of that."

The pharmaceutical company has been a corporate partner of the Burlington Art Centre since it opened and became a President's Club sponsor of Performing Arts Burlington (PAB) two years ago. Recently, Boehringer Ingelheim pledged \$250,000 over the next three years towards the development of the Performing Arts Centre, which is slated for completion in 2009. "It's an extraordinary gift that challenges others to give," says Jim Seferiades, business services planner with the City's Parks and Recreation department. "When an organization like this says it's a worthwhile project, it heightens awareness and gives the project credibility."

Still headquartered in Ingelheim, Germany, the company has 152 affiliates in 45 countries. Boehringer Ingelheim's research and development has resulted in products for the treatment of arthritis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), HIV/AIDS, hypertension, Parkinson's disease and stroke.

The pharmaceutical company is currently conducting one of the largest clinical studies of hypertension involving its drug Micardis. So far, 25,000 patients in 40 countries are enrolled in the program, with results expected in March 2008.

Mills says Canada is an attractive place to conduct trials and Canadian medical research is among the best in the world. In Ontario, Boehringer Ingelheim is currently investigating respiratory treatments, as well as treatments for stroke, HIV/AIDS, Alzheimer's, rheumatoid arthritis, cystic fibrosis and depression. "Our vision is value through innovation," explains Mills. "We encourage openness and debate and we encourage our people to take risks and be provocative."

For the last five years Boehringer Ingelheim Canada has surpassed average industry growth, says Mills. He credits the commitment and determination of its 600-plus employees for the company's continued success. Boehringer Ingelheim believes individual and corporate success stems from leading and learning. Every employee plays an integral part in the company's ability to lead and learn by taking a moment to consider four important questions: Are they connected? Are they growing together? Are they getting results and are they taking initiative?

The answers to these questions keep employees focused on individual and company-wide goals. The payoff: in 2006, Canadian sales were \$332 million, with global sales reaching \$10 billion Euro.

Initiative is one thing Albert Boehringer had plenty of when he founded the company in 1885. What started as a 20-person operation has today grown to employ 38,000 individuals across the world. In Canada, the Burlington location is dedicated to administration, marketing, sales and distribution. At the research centre in Laval, Quebec, employees are working on discoveries in virology to determine treatments for hepatitis C, and HIV.

While the products produced over the years have changed, the premise behind the discovery has remained the same.

Albert Boehringer discovered a new process to produce lactic acid while operating a chemical factory manufacturing tartaric acid salts. This innovation was followed by the development of analgesic, cough syrup, cardiovascular and respiratory medicines. The company continued to grow and by the time of Boehringer's death in 1939, it employed 1,500.

Innovation continued under the leadership of Albert and Ernst Boehringer, Albert's two sons, and his son-in-law, Julius Liebrecht. The business quadrupled in size by 1955. At this time, the family-owned business developed agents for the treatment of respiratory, cardiovascular and gastrointestinal diseases. These breakthroughs, combined with Ernst's understanding of the need to expand the company, laid the foundation for future research and success.

Last year, Boehringer Ingelheim allocated one-fifth of net sales in its prescriptions business unit to research and development at the company's six R&D sites. In Biberach, Germany, research is targeting diseases of the central nervous system as well as metabolic and respiratory diseases; in Vienna, Austria, researchers and scientists are working on drug discoveries in oncology. In Ridgefield, U.S., employees are researching immunology, inflammation and cardiovascular diseases. There are also two specialized research centres in Milan, Italy and Kawanishi, Japan.

Albert Boehringer's spirit of innovation was not limited to product development. He was also a pioneer in employee incentives, introducing health insurance in 1902, two weeks annual vacation in 1910, and a company pension for employees with 20 years of service two years later. Employee appreciation is another company cornerstone that has flourished since the beginning.



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Named one of Canada's top 50 employers in 2005, Boehringer Ingelheim Canada offers a generous benefits package, including subsidized gym memberships. The company also hosts a variety of events throughout the year that encourage creativity, wellness or foster community partnerships. A photography contest, monthly bagel days, dragon boat races in the summer and the Big Bike Race for the Halton Heart and Stroke Foundation are a few examples.

Joint ventures are one way the company fosters its “lead and learn” cycle. Besides striking partnerships with organizations such as the Ontario Lung Association and sponsoring educational programs such as Breathworks, an Internet resource for COPD patients, the company recently struck a partnership with an Ontario research firm investigating potential treatments for HIV.

When Boehringer Ingelheim Canada established roots in Burlington 30 years ago, it did so because it considered Burlington a family-oriented community with amenities for employees. Mills, an avid

theatregoer and opera lover, says Burlington has been lacking a performing arts venue like the one slated for the corner of Locust and Elgin Streets for some time, and he's excited about the possibilities for the community (see sidebars on pages 17 and 18).

Pam Eddenden, executive director of PAB, admires Boehringer Ingelheim for its initiative in support of the arts. “I think it's fantastic when business can make a connection to the community and see the value in giving back,” says Eddenden. As a President's Club sponsor, the company's \$10,000 contribution this year helped make the PAB's Second to None event possible and funds arts development programs designed to help individuals and groups fine-tune their skills.

“A vibrant arts community contributes significantly to good health,” Mills says. “Art, music and dance are motivating and stimulating and bring people together.” | **IB**

Performing Arts Centre's design exemplifies needs of community

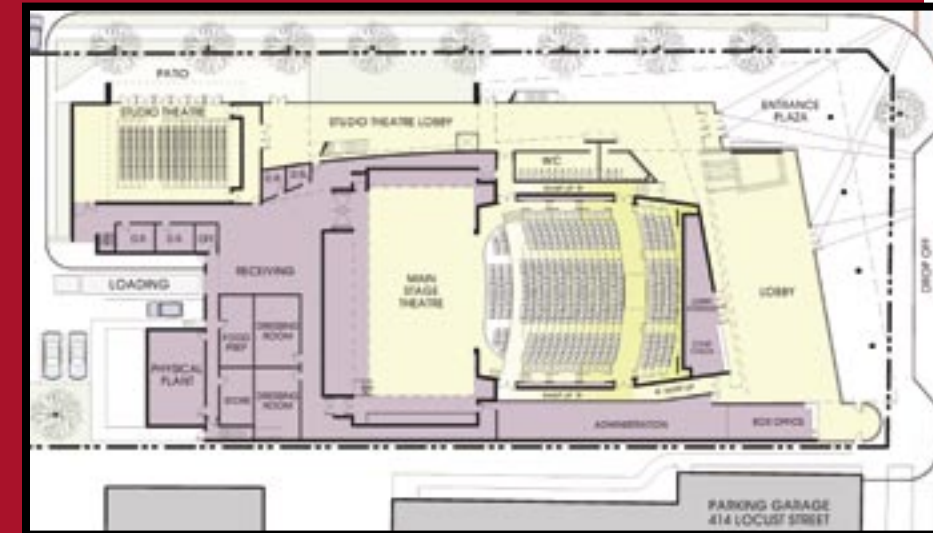
When the curtain rises and the band begins to play at the new Burlington Performing Arts Centre (PAC), Walter Mulkewich will be a happy man. “The PAC is a dream that many people in Burlington have had for a long time,” says Mulkewich, former mayor and long-time advocate of the arts. According to him, the performing arts centre is the missing piece in the community's infrastructure.

The project is now a few steps closer to becoming a reality thanks to Boehringer Ingeleheim's pledge of \$250,000 over the next three years towards the PAC's development.

Jim Seferiades, business services planner for the City's Parks and Recreation department, says the innovative, flexible design (prepared by Keith Loffler McAlpine Architects) epitomizes the goals of the new performing arts facility. The main stage theatre accommodates 718; the studio theatre seats 225 patrons and the lobbies on both levels will provide venues for informal gatherings such as exhibits and receptions. The centre will also be equipped with a fly-tower for large-scale theatrical performances such as *Cats*, adds Sandra Baker, campaign coordinator.

Performing Arts Burlington (PAB) was a driving force behind the campaign for a performing arts venue, and the centre's design reflects the needs of its membership. In addition to offering national and international performances and productions, the new facility will give local groups an opportunity to enhance their programs and showcase their talents, Baker says.

Construction of the 48,000-square-foot facility will begin in the spring of 2008, with completion expected for the end of 2009. The bidding process to build the centre will begin soon and a general manager to oversee the project will be hired shortly.



Architectural drawing of the ground plan for the new Burlington Performing Arts Centre.



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Performing Arts Burlington driving force behind new arts centre

Since the 1980s, various individuals and groups have tried to get the idea of creating a new performing arts venue for this city off the ground.

Over the years, circumstances changed, as did the people involved, until finally the subject came up again in the late 1990s.

As a result, Performing Arts Burlington (PAB) was formed, says Walter Mulkewich, past president of PAB's Board of Directors.

What PAB does

Today, PAB represents and supports a variety of organizations and individuals in the Burlington and Hamilton area. In addition to spearheading the drive for a performing arts centre in Burlington, PAB provides residents with an opportunity to

explore local theatre, music, and dance, says executive director Pam Eddenden. The non-profit organization also publicizes member activities, hosts workshops and communicates performing arts information.



Former mayor Walter Mulkewich is a long-time advocate of Burlington's arts community.

After PAB garnered the attention of officials at City Hall, the City of Burlington adopted the project as part of its 2005 strategic plan. Mulkewich, who has been involved with the movement for a performing arts centre from the beginning, says he is elated to finally see it happen. "The arts link

the human spirit to the city and help make a city dynamic and creative."

Presently, a nine-person PAC advisory committee, made up of technicians, production managers and arts producers from the performing arts community, has been established to advise the City on the facility's design regarding particulars such as loading docks, dressing rooms, lighting, sound and other factors.

For Mulkewich and many others, the Performing Arts Centre is the final ingredient in a recipe for a strong, vibrant arts community. "The PAC will become a focus for music, drama, and dance, allowing local groups to reach their potential and allowing Burlington audiences to enjoy good performances in Burlington," he says.

For more information on the Performing Arts Centre and Performing Arts Burlington, visit www.performingartsburlington.com.