

Supports Item No. 1
Special CS&B Committee Agenda
March 1, 2010



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: February 16, 2010
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Meeting Date: March 1, 2010

TO: Special Standing Committee on City Services and Budgets
FROM: Director, Grants, Awards and Support Programs, Cultural Services
SUBJECT: 2010 Theatre Rental Grant Allocations

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council approve \$2,733,710 Theatre Rental Grants as listed in Table 1; source of funds to be \$2,284,600 from the Theatre Rental Grants budget; a one-time reallocation of \$199,110 from the Cultural Tourism Grant Program, and a permanent \$250,000 from increased Civic Theatre revenues beginning 2010.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Community Services recommends approval of the foregoing.

COUNCIL POLICY

Approval of grant recommendations requires eight affirmative votes.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to recommend the following: 2010 Theatre Rental Grant allocations; a grant to the Vancouver Symphony Society to off-set 2010 office rent; a one-time reallocation of funds from the Cultural Tourism Program budget to the Theatre Rental Grants budget to support increased activity and Olympic related opportunities; and a permanent increase to the Theatre Rental Grants budget to reflect the City's historical support of the VSO in the Orpheum.

BACKGROUND

In 1979, City Council approved the Theatre Rental Grants program which assigned annual "base level" uses to cultural organizations to access to the Civic Theatres annually. In 1995, Council approved the process for Theatre Rental Grants which provided for seasonally based grants allocated in July of each year for the coming "fall" (the second half of a given year)

and "spring" (the first half of the following year). Recommendations for the spring of the following year were approved in principle, in advance of the Operating Budget Review for that year.

On September 12, 2000, Council approved the establishment of a "reserve pool" of theatre rental uses to assist established performing arts organizations that did not have designated "base level" uses of the Civic Theatres. These uses could also be accessed by regular users if additional uses were needed in a given season.

On July 13, 2006, Council approved a budget of \$20,000 to establish a Theatre Rental "Projects" Grant program, to replace the Baxter Grant Program which had been established to assist occasional, new and diverse non-profit arts and cultural organizations wanting access to Vancouver's Civic Theatres. The Baxter Grant Fund was established through the Vancouver Foundation and administered by the City through Cultural Services and was wound up with all funds disbursed in 2005, as intended.

On June 26, 2008, Council approved the Culture Plan Implementation Phase 1 - Review of Grants Programs, which directed staff to streamline programs and administration to align with the City's new strategic cultural priorities and to increase efficiencies in program administration. Changes to Theatre Rental Grants Program include shifting from a seasonal allocation to a calendar year allocation, eliminating the 'base use' level and reserve pool allocation to an annual 'lump sum' award based on past use trends and proposed use needs, increasing access to Civic Theatres for occasional, new and diverse groups, and including the Theatre Rental Grant applicants in the annual application process for Cultural Grants. Further changes to the program will be made in tandem with the strategic review of Civic Theatre operations, scheduled to commence in 2010.

DISCUSSION

Theatre Rental Grants Recommendations

In assessing the requests for Theatre Rental Grants in 2010, there was a notable increase in activity as a result of the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympics as groups participate in the Cultural Olympiad or related celebrations. Several significant productions and performances are being presented including *Nixon in China* (Vancouver Opera), *Beyond Eden* and *Laurie Anderson* (Vancouver Playhouse Theatre), *Mahler Symphony No. 8* (Vancouver Symphony and the Vancouver Bach Choir), *Son of Chamber Symphony* (Turning Point Ensemble), *Compagnie Marie Chouinard* and *Kidd Pivot* (DanceHouse) and the Vancouver International Dance Festival (VIDF), will be using the Vancouver Playhouse for the first time as a result presenting three companies in March during their festival and as part of the Cultural Olympiad. The incremental impact on the budget is \$199,110.

Every effort is made to provide access to new groups wanting to professionalize their work and reach a broader audience. For 2010, two emerging dance groups are being recommended for a grant for the first time: *Movement Dance Productions*, a new contemporary dance company under the artistic leadership of Josh Beamish, and the Vancouver International Bhangra Celebration, formed in 2005, a young society that promotes the Indian dance form of Bhangra. The inclusion of these two vibrant young organizations as users of the civic theatres increases the diversity of cultural productions available to Vancouver audiences.

The recommendations, totalling \$2.7 million for Theatre Rental Grants are summarized in Table 1.

Vancouver Symphony Society (VSO) Lease and Grant Adjustment

On October 24, 1989, Council approved the lease of the Orpheum basement to the VSO for offices. The annual rent was set at \$100,000, to be offset by a City grant in the same amount. The lease has been renewed annually, subject to approval of the grant from the City. Staff are recommending that this lease be at the rental rate of \$100,000 for the period of January 1 to December 31, 2010 inclusive, and that a grant be recommended to cover the lease cost; the source of funds to be the 2010 Theatre Rental Grants budget.

The City took ownership in 1973 and thereafter the VSO was granted the cost use of the theatre through the Theatre Rental Grants program. While the Theatre Rental Grants program covered costs associated to performances and rehearsals it did not support much of the added stage use cost.

Prior to 1986 the VSO was treated the same as all other users within the Theatre Rental Grants program. In 1986-87 the VSO was on the verge of bankruptcy and the City took a leadership role in restructuring the organization. As part of that restructuring, the VSO's status within the Theatre Rental Grants program was changed and stage uses for rehearsals were absorbed in Civic Theatres' operating budget, no longer subject to the usual grant review and approvals. The cost of unaccounted stage use time is now at \$250,000 annually. An increase to the Theatre Rental Grants program budget to offset these specific expenses will show an increase in earned revenue for the Civic Theatres. Staff recommend that this amount be added to the Theatre Rental Grants budget and these uses by the VSO, be included in the Theatre Rental Grants program process, subject to the usual reviews and approvals.

Cultural Tourism Strategy

On June 26, 2008, as part of the Culture Plan Implementation, Council approved a Cultural Tourism Strategy for the City (RTS#7613). This established a framework for the City's role, responsibilities and investments in cultural tourism. The goals of the strategy were to maximize opportunities for the cultural community and build on Vancouver's reputation as a culturally-vibrant destination through significant events such as the Juno Awards, the 2010 Olympic and Paralympics Winter Games and the City's 125th Anniversary Celebration. This initiative is underway after a brief delay due to a restructuring of resources within Cultural Services and available implementation resources.

As this is a significant year for many organizations accessing the Civic Theatres due to the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympics, it is important to support these organizations and help minimize the risk and maximize the benefits in presenting larger scale productions to a local and visiting audience. As this is a natural tie-in with the Cultural Tourism Strategy, staff are recommending a one-time transfer from the Cultural Tourism Program budget to maximize this opportunity and to support the increased activity.

TABLE 1 - 2010 Theatre Rental Grant Recommendations

Organization	2010 Request	2010 Recommendation	2009 Grant
Ballet British Columbia	\$122,510	\$122,510	\$108,635
Children's Arts Umbrella	\$8,790	5,860	\$5,630
Coastal Jazz and Blues	\$22,200	22,200	\$21,300
DanceHouse (Seismic Shift)	\$41,350	17,820	\$11,490
Friends of Chamber Music	\$26,970	\$26,970	\$16,620
Movement Dance Productions	\$7,325	\$5,860	
Vancouver Summer Festival	\$13,300	\$11,100	
Turning Point Ensemble	\$2,930	\$2,930	\$5,630
Van. Academy of Music	\$42,075	\$42,075	\$40,400
Van. Bach Choir	\$78,210	\$78,210	\$58,695
Van. Chamber Choir	\$38,025	\$38,025	\$36,958
Van. Int. Bhangra Celebration	\$16,500	\$11,100	
Van. Int. Dance Festival	\$21,975	\$14,650	
Van. Opera Assn.	\$543,210	\$543,200	\$387,578
Van. Playhouse Theatre Co.	\$573,225	\$538,835	\$506,195
Van. Recital Society	\$23,830	\$23,830	\$38,985
Van. Symphony Society	1,125,475	875,475	\$935,960
<i>Grant Adjustment</i>		250,000	
Van. Youth Symphony Society	\$3,050	\$3,050	
Total Theatre Rental Grants	\$2,707,900	\$2,633,710	\$2,204,190
VSO Office Rent Grant	100,000	100,000	100,000
Total Theatre Rent Grants	\$2,807,900	\$2,733,710	\$2,304,190

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Total recommended Theatre Rental Grants total \$2.734 million which, along with base rental grant levels, represents \$0.100 million for VSO Office Rent, \$0.199 million for increased activity levels due to the 2010 Winter Olympics, and \$0.25 million related to historical usage levels of the VSO. Funding for the recommendations is listed in Table 2 below.

Table 2 - 2010 Theatre Rental Grants Budget

Theatre Rental Grants Budget	\$2,284,600
Cultural Tourism Grants Program (one time transfer to Theatre Rental Grant Program)	\$199,110
Increased Civic Theatres Rental Revenue (related to VSO Usage)	250,000
Total Funding	\$2,733,710

Approval of all recommendations leaves no unallocated resources in the Theatre Rental Grants budget.

CONCLUSION

Approval of these recommendations will assist several organizations in presenting a diversity of work to Vancouver and international audiences throughout 2010. It further fulfills the Cultural Tourism Strategy in maximizing opportunities for several organizations in presenting significant work to new audiences and it adjusts the City's contribution to the VSO to reflect the actual uses of the Civic Theatres.

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