



## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: September 26, 2014  
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VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20  
Meeting Date: October 15, 2014

TO: Standing Committee on City Finance and Services

FROM: General Manager of Community Services in consultation with the Director of Vancouver Civic Theatres

SUBJECT: 2014/15 Theatre Rental Grant Allocations

### ***RECOMMENDATION***

- A. THAT Council approve \$24,000 to the Vancouver Opera Association and \$111,421 to the Vancouver Symphony Society for a total of \$135,421 for use of the Civic Theatres in 2014, as listed in Table 1; source of funds to be the 2014 Theatre Rental Grant operating budget.
- B. THAT Council approve, in advance of the 2015 operating budget, Theatre Rental Grants to 32 organizations for Civic Theatre uses from January 1-August 31, 2015 totalling \$1,624,890, as listed in Table 2; source of funds to be the 2015 Theatre Rental Grant operating budget.
- C. THAT Council authorize the Director of Cultural Services to review the Theatre Rental Grant policy and procedures and report back on recommended changes to the program, in the first quarter of 2015.

### ***REPORT SUMMARY***

In accordance with a process Council established in 1995, this report recommends approval of Theatre Rental Grants (TRG) for the balance of 2014 and for the first eight months of 2015.

### ***COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS***

On June 24, 2014, Council approved Theatre Rental Grants to 31 organizations leaving \$117,839 of the 2014 budget to be allocated in fall 2014 (RTS 10509).

Approval of grant recommendations requires eight affirmative votes.

#### ***CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS***

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

#### ***REPORT***

##### ***Background/Context***

Theatre Rental Grants lower the rental costs for cultural non-profit producers and presenters that use the City's four well-equipped, downtown civic theatre venues. It serves both large-scale companies and smaller-sized users through an annual grant program.

The Theatre Rental Grant annual public call for applications was issued in March 2014 for Civic Theatres uses from January 1-August 31, 2015. Applications were received from 35 organizations who collectively applied for more than 300 events in the theatres during this eight-month time frame. Applicants await their grant recommendations in order to commit to producing and presenting at the Civic Theatres in 2015.

##### ***Strategic Analysis***

In 1995, Council approved the process for Theatre Rental Grants wherein staff recommended a grant in lieu of rent to long-term, large-scale users of the Vancouver Civic Theatres and the Vancouver Civic Theatres applied the non-cash grant to reduce those users' invoice totals. The review and recommendation process has been adjusted several times since 1995 to try to expand eligibility and better align with the Civic Theatre programming season. Some efficiencies were achieved, but they never got to the root of the grant program's inflexible and complicated foundations. With a new Director focused on renewal at the Civic Theatres, it is time to re-build a client-focused program that has a simple and streamlined foundation.

Staff will use the strategies set out in the Culture Plan Strategic Directions (2013) to review and modify the Theatre Rental Grant program's outdated policies and administrative processes, and will report back to Council in the first quarter of 2015 with recommended changes to the TRG program, policies and procedures.

#### **Recommendation A: Theatre Rental Grant Recommendations - Balance of 2014**

In a June 2014 Report (RTS 10509), Council left \$117,839 unallocated in the 2014 Theatre Rental Grant budget. Some 2014 grant recipients have since cancelled 2014 bookings thereby increasing the available funds by \$17,582, and bringing the total available for allocation to \$135,421.

Staff recommend two (2) grants totalling \$135,421 to help with eligible expenses for the Civic Theatres' largest non-profit users: Vancouver Opera Association and Vancouver Symphony Society. Of the 500+ uses tracked by Theatre Rental Grants per year, these two organizations

account for almost 400 (~80%) of them. This strategic allocation to cover more of their unfunded but eligible uses at the Civic Theatre venues is recommended.

**TABLE 1 - Balance of 2014 Theatre Rental Grant Recommendations**

Organization	Additional VCT Receivables on Eligible Expenses	\$ Recommended
Van. Opera Assn.	25,105	\$24,000
Van. Symphony Soc.	115,913	111,421
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$141,018</b>	<b>\$135,421</b>

**Recommendation B: Theatre Rental Grant Recommendations - January - August 2015**

In April 2014, Cultural Services received a total of 35 Theatre Rental Grant applications for the first eight months of 2015 requesting support of more than 300 events in Civic Theatre venues. The 35 applicants had a total request of \$1,826,796. The 32 recommended grants herein total \$1,624,890.

Applications were evaluated against published criteria and cross-checked against booking dates and theatre availability. The review of eligible events considers each proposal's relative merits, its potential to expand audiences, the organization's capacity to produce the proposed event, and the community impact of the presentation.

For the period under review (January 1 - August 31, 2015) we received grant requests of \$1,826,796. Not every eligible organization can be funded and not every funded organization can receive their requested amount. Priority for granting is balanced between large-scale companies using the Civic Theatres and project-based users who are expanding their audiences, their financial risk and their artistic development. Scheduled performances for the public have a higher priority to receive grants than client rehearsals at the theatres. Furthermore, priority for granting is higher when grant applicants have either confirmed bookings or first holds (e.g. their place in line to rent a particular venue and date) rather than second, third (or higher) holds. With all these considerations in place, the following grants are recommended per Table 2.

**TABLE 2 - January - August 2015 Theatre Rental Grant Recommendations**

Organization	\$ Requested	\$ Recommended
Awkward Stage Productions Soc.	1,035	1,035
Ballet B.C. (Pacific Ballet B.C. Soc.)	188,185	180,610
Celtic Fest Van. Soc.	2,070	2,070
Children's Arts Umbrella Assn.	22,520	22,520
Coastal Jazz and Blues Soc.	50,560	25,280
DanceHouse (Seismic Shift Arts Soc.)	20,020	18,350
DOXA Documentary Film and Video Festival (The Documentary Media Soc.)	10,005	10,005

Early Music Vancouver (Van. Soc. for Early Music)	2,070	2,070
Erato Ensemble Soc.	3,105	3,105
Friends of Chamber Music	35,860	35,860
Grand Ensemble	4,310	0
Indian Summer Arts Soc.	20,465	19,310
Karen Flamenco Dance Soc.	7,515	5,845
MOVE: the company (Movement Dance Productions Soc.)	8,340	8,335
New Performance Works Soc.	3,105	3,105
Norman Rothstein Theatre (Van. Westside Theatre Soc.)	3,335	3,335
Pride in Art Soc.	3,335	3,335
PuSH International Performing Arts Festival Soc.	12,975	11,675
Sophisticated Laughter Theatrical Soc.	3,660	0
Theatre B.C.	7,245	5,175
Tsleil Waututh Nation	12,640	0
Van. Academy of Music	28,440	28,440
Van. Bach Choir	21,233	18,960
Van. Chamber Choir	21,485	18,960
Van. Chinese Singers Soc.	3,335	3,335
Van. Chopin Soc.	6,670	6,670
Van. Intl. Bhangra Celebration Soc.	14,155	12,640
Van. Intl. Dance Festival Soc.	10,010	10,010
Van. New Music Soc.	3,105	3,105
Van. Opera Assn.	240,380	215,055
Van. Out on Screen Film Festival Soc.	10,005	6,670
Van. Pro Musica (Pro Musica Soc. of Van.)	1,035	1,035
Van. Recital Soc.	29,225	29,225
Van. Seniors' Singing Club Assn.	11,690	11,690
Van. Symphony Soc.	1,003,673	898,075
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,826,796</b>	<b>1,624,890</b>

Table 3 summarizes the financial implications of Recommendations A and B:

**Table 3 - Summary of Theatre Rental Grants funding and allocation**

2014 Theatre Rental Grants Budget (Unallocated balance from June)	117,839
2014 Grant recipients that have cancelled 2014 bookings	17,582
2015 Theatre Rental Grants Budget	2,583,300
<b>TOTAL FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR ALLOCATION</b>	<b>2,718,721</b>
Rec A: Balance of 2014 Theatre Rental Grant Recommendations	(135,421)
Rec B: Theatre Rental Grants Recommended in this report - Jan-Aug 2015	(1,624,890)
<b>TOTAL GRANTS RECOMMENDED FOR ALLOCATION</b>	<b>(1,760,311)</b>
2014 Theatre Rental Grant Unallocated Budget	\$ 0
2015 Theatre Rental Grant Unallocated Budget	\$ 958,410

### Recommendation C: Revise Theatre Rental Grant Policy and Procedures

The new Director of Vancouver Civic Theatres had identified several issues of note with the program relating to the timing of the call for applications, pricing structures, budgeting process, internal administrative procedures, and a need for a more flexible mechanism to re-allocate grants for cancelled or postponed rentals.

Prior to the next intake of grant applications, staff from Vancouver Civic Theatres, Cultural and Financial Services—with input from key stakeholders—will work together as a high priority to develop relevant policies and responsive procedures that will maximize the grant program's administrative effectiveness and availability to users with changing needs, including a review of the budget process to better support the updated procedures.

Staff will report back in the first quarter of 2015 on the recommended changes to the Theatre Rental grant program, policy and procedures. Thereafter, staff will issue its annual public call for grant applications for theatre uses for the period beginning September 1, 2015.

### *Financial*

The 2014 Theatre Rental Grants budget is \$2,583,300. In a June 2014 Report (RTS 10509), Council left \$117,839 unallocated in the 2014 Theatre Rental Grant budget. Some 2014 grant recipients have since cancelled 2014 bookings worth \$17,582, to bring the total available funds for allocation to \$135,421 in the 2014 Theatre Rental Grants budget.

From this budget, staff recommend two (2) Theatre Rental Grants with a total value of \$135,421, leaving no unallocated balance of the 2014 Theatre Rental Grants budget.

Assuming no change to the 2015 Theatre Rental Grant budget, staff are further recommending approval in advance of the 2015 budget process, 32 Theatre Rental Grants with a combined value of \$1,624,890 for the first eight months of 2015. The source of funds is to be the 2015

Theatre Rental Grant operating budget, leaving \$958,410 to allocate in the last four months of 2015.

### *CONCLUSION*

Approval of these Theatre Rental Grant recommendations will support a diverse and thriving cultural ecology that enriches the lives of residents and visitors through a wide range of cultural activities featuring professional and community artists from diverse communities. Reviewing Theatre Rental Grant Program policy and procedures changes will both simplify administration and enhance user experience of the Civic Theatres, to expand access to these facilities to a wider user group, and to maximize non-profit use of the rental fund.

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