



REPORT

Report Date: April 20, 2021
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Meeting Date: May 18, 2021
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TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: General Manager of Arts, Culture, and Community Services
SUBJECT: Theatre Rental Grant Allocations – Fall 2021 and Spring 2022

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT, subject to pending Provincial Health Order responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, Council approve Theatre Rental Grants to 41 organizations totalling \$1,599,569 for use of the Civic Theatres from September 1 - December 31, 2021 in the amounts recommended for each organization in the “2021 Recomm.” column in Appendix A. Source of funding is the 2021 Cultural Grants Operating budget (Theatre Rental Grants).
- B. THAT, subject to pending Provincial Health Order responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, Council approve, in advance of the 2022 operating budget, Theatre Rental Grants to 49 organizations for use of the Civic Theatres from January 1 - August 31, 2022, totalling \$1,820,205 recommended for each organization in the “2022 Recomm.” column in Appendix B. Source of funding is to be the 2022 Cultural Grants Operating budget (Theatre Rental Grants).
- C. THAT, pursuant to Section 206 (1) (j) of the *Vancouver Charter*, Council deems any organization listed in Appendix A and Appendix B that is not a charity registered with the Canada Revenue Agency to be contributing to the culture of Vancouver.
- D. THAT the General Manager of Arts, Culture, and Community Services (GM of ACCS) (or their designate) is authorized to negotiate and execute agreements to disburse the grants described in this report on the terms and conditions generally set out below, and on such other terms and conditions as are satisfactory to the GM of ACCS and the Director of Legal Services.

- E. THAT no legal rights or obligations are created by the approval of Recommendation A and B above unless and until the applicable theatre license agreement is complete and approved by the City in accordance with Recommendation D above and executed and delivered by both the grant recipient and GM of ACCS (or their designate).

Recommendations A, B, C, and D, require two-thirds affirmative votes of all Council members per section 206 (1) of the *Vancouver Charter*.

REPORT SUMMARY

This report recommends grants to 41 cultural organizations for a total of \$1,599,569 for use of the Vancouver Civic Theatres (VCT) during the Fall 2021 performing arts season that runs from September 1, 2021, to December 31, 2021.

This report recommends grants to 49 cultural organizations for a total of \$1,820,205 for use of the Vancouver Civic Theatres (VCT) during the Spring 2022 performing arts season that runs from January 1, 2022, to August 31, 2022.

The recommendations have been made by a staff assessment process - a process that is rooted in the key directions of *Culture|Shift (C|S)*, COVID-19 recovery, VCT Restart Plans, and the City's COVID-19 Economic and Business Recovery program to restart the economic, social, and cultural recovery of the city.

COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS

On July 9, 2019, (RTS 12991) Council approved new rental rates for VCT that included both commercial and not-for-profit rental rates for three consecutive seasons from September 1, 2020, to August 31, 2023.

On November 24, 2020, (RTS 14153), Council approved 40 Theatre Rental Grants totalling \$1,463,870 for the period of January 1-August 31, 2021 for use of the Civic Theatres in support of COVID-19 recovery and key directions of *Culture|Shift (C|S)*.

CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager recommends approval of the foregoing.

REPORT

Theatre Rental Grants (TRG) are non-cash grants that support eligible cultural not-for-profit producers and presenters to access the City's professionally-equipped, downtown civic theatre venues and associated spaces: the Queen Elizabeth Theatre (QET), the Orpheum, the Vancouver Playhouse, the Annex, and Ɂxwʌ́ exən Xwtl'a7shn (formerly known as the Plaza). Grants to these organizations animate the City's theatres and present a range of culturally diverse performances for public enjoyment. This program is one of many programs, awards, and services that the City offers to support a diverse and thriving cultural ecology.

The TRG program is designed to support Vancouver-based, professional not-for-profit arts and cultural organizations that have a mission to develop, create, produce, present, and disseminate artistic work for the benefit of the public and the arts sector, in any artistic discipline (e.g. Indigenous arts, community arts, dance, interdisciplinary, literary, media, multidisciplinary, music, theatre, visual arts).

This in-kind grant program provides rental subsidy and assistance for certain VCT costs (including a portion of event staff labour costs and in-house technical equipment) and serves a range of organizations, from large-scale year-round users through to small-sized occasional users. The program objectives are to assist organizations with artistic development, to increase their profile, and expand their audiences.

The TRG annual public call for applications was issued in February 2021 for VCT uses for the 2021/22 (Sept. 1, 2021-Aug. 31, 2022) performing arts season. Applications were received via an online submission process from 63 organizations for performances during this 12-month time frame.

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus a pandemic and all non-essential venues and services were directed to be closed to limit gatherings and stop the spread of the virus. As a result, all cultural organizations closed or temporarily suspended operations, and several had to lay off hundreds of staff.

The arts and culture sector, like many other sectors, has been deeply impacted by COVID-19. Last year Council supported the sector through approving additional uses for grants, including the re-purposing of TRG funding, as well as specific COVID-19 recovery grants to allow artists and cultural groups to adapt and continue to deliver critical programs and services for the community.

Due to on-going COVID-19 pandemic and the necessary, real time, updates to scheduling and adjustments to how programming is to take place to meet the necessary health and safety guidelines, it was determined that staff bring forward to Council the recommendations for Fall 2020 TRG (September 1, 2020- December 31, 2020) and Spring 2021 TRG (January 1-August 31, 2021) as two separate recommendations that were subsequently approved.

Strategic Analysis

In accordance with current Provincial Health Order responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, Vancouver Civic Theatres (VCT) are currently in Phase I of their Restart Plan which includes providing access to Spring 2021 TRG groups to reach their audiences in new ways and to provide access to performing arts spaces as organizations seek larger spaces to ensure health and safety protocols are met, including social distancing and on-line recorded performances. VCT staff are very close to finalizing their re-opening plans to include Phase II of the Restart Plan which includes access to additional VCT spaces and events with potential audiences, subject to Provincial Health Orders, and are targeting the end of the Spring 2021 Season as the start of Phase II of the Restart Plan. VCT continue to work with the community to adapt the use of space in innovative ways to comply with new health and safety requirements. These grants will support some of the most impacted performing arts groups as they continue to adjust their plans to support artists and bring content to the public in new ways (various access to VCT facilities, socially distanced audience attending events, activating non-theatre space including lobbies and *šxʷł exən Xwtl'a7shn*, and digital performance experiences) and as they plan for an eventual return to pre-pandemic performance based programming.

The 2021/2022 TRG season at VCT features a wide range of classical and contemporary performances in dance, theatre, and music. The work reflects the diversity of Vancouver's cultural communities, which include Indigenous, East and South Asia, Latin America, and LGBTQ2+. Some examples of recommended TRG include Full Circle First Nations Performance, Holy Crow Arts Society, Kara-Kata Afro Beat Society, Raven Spirt Dance, The Vancouver Out on Screen Film and Video Society, Indian Summer Arts Society, and others.

The applications were evaluated by a staff team from VCT and Cultural Services using the published criteria, and cross-checking applicants' bookings and theatre availability. The review considers the organization's capacity to produce the event as proposed, and the community impact of the presentation. Grants are being recommended to applicants as listed in Appendix A (Sept. 1-Dec. 31, 2021) and Appendix B (Jan. 1-Aug 31, 2022).

These grants will be made conditional upon groups providing updates to adapting their programs to comply with VCT re-opening plans, which include the necessary adjustments to be able to program events in a safe way from a health and safety perspective. Grants will also be made conditional for those who are intending to use VCT ancillary spaces and venues that are not their usual performing spaces.

Any grants not fully used or that are canceled will be repurposed to consider initiatives coming from the community to support groups' creation, development, and alternative ways of bringing their performances to the public.

The TRG program is currently one of the few non-cash grants within the Cultural Services grant programs. It is a direct internal transfer from the Cultural Services Grants budget to the VCT Operating Budget. Council approved TRG are disbursed as a credit equal to the appropriate, approved, eligible event cost and is applied as rental revenue to the VCT Operating Budget.

For the 2021/22 performing arts season, \$4,244,704 in rental support was requested and a total of \$3,419,774 is recommended in this report, a difference of \$824,930 as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1 – Summary of 2021/2022 Theatre Rental Grants Requests & Recommendations

2021 Theatre Rental Grant Requests (Sept. – Dec.)	1,599,569
2022 Theatre Rental Grant Requests (Jan. – Aug.)	2,644,505
TOTAL Theatre Rental Grant Requests for 2021/22 Season	4,244,704
2021 Theatre Rental Grant Recommendations (Sept. - Dec. Appendix 1)	1,599,569
2022 Theatre Rental Grant Recommendations (Jan. - Aug. Appendix 2)	1,820,205
TOTAL 2021/22 Theatre Rental Grant Recommendations in this report	3,419,774
Difference between 2021/2022 Recommendations and Requests	(824,930)

There is growing pressure on the TRG program as a result of increasing growth in the creative community. Groups program plans are in anticipation of a gradual return to pre-pandemic performing arts based programming. As existing groups expand their level of activity and with efforts to increase access to the program, requests for grants have been increasing. As a result, the TRG process is competitive and not all requests meet the evaluation criteria to the same degree as other applicants and therefore, not every organization can be recommended for funding to the level of their request.

For organizations that did not receive the full TRG request, it is still possible to rent the venue for their events by requesting a not-for-profit rate directly from VCT, subject to the applicant's own financial resources. The not-for-profit rate will also be available to those groups that did not apply to TRG, that missed the annual deadline, or are yet to book dates for future productions that fall within the 2021/2022 season.

Financial

The 2021 TRG budget is \$2,829,608. In November 2020 (RTS 14153), Council approved in grants totalling \$1,463,870 for Spring 2021 events at VCT venues. Due to the on-going restrictions on public events as set out by the Provincial Health Officer, many granted organizations have made the difficult decision to either not proceed at all with any of their Spring 2021 VCT bookings, or have been forced to alter their programming to meet these restrictions and therefore, as of the April 20, 2021, it is forecasted that there will be \$453,506 of unspent Spring 2021 TRG. This will leave a forecasted total of \$219,675 of TRG to be allocated at the end of 2021, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 – Summary of 2021 Theatre Rental Grants funding

2021 Theatre Rental Grants Budget	2,829,608
2021 Theatre Rental Grants (Jan. – Aug.) allocated November 2020 (RTS 14153)	(1,463,870)
2021 Theatre Rental Grants Spring 2021 cancellations or underuses (forecast as of April 20, 2021)	453,506
TOTAL FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR ALLOCATION	1,819,244
2021 Theatre Rental Grants recommended in this report – Sept. – Dec.	(1,599,569)
2021 FORECASTED THEATRE RENTAL GRANTS BALANCE	219,675

Staff are therefore recommending 41 grants totalling \$1,599,569 for Sept. 1 - Dec. 31, 2021. The source of funds is the 2021 TRG budget. In the event that there is a TRG balance for the period of April - Dec. 2021, staff will present recommendations to Council for repurposing of grants to allow artists and cultural groups to continue to adapt and deliver critical programs and services for the community later in the year.

This report also requests approval of grants to 49 organizations for VCT uses from Jan 1-Aug 31, 2022 totalling \$1,820,205 in advance of Council's approval of the 2022 operating budget. The source of funds is to be the 2022 Cultural Grants Operating budget. These grants are summarized in Table 3 and listed in Appendix B. Should the 2022 TRG budget remain the same as 2021 at \$2,829,608, a balance of \$1,009,403 in TRG funds will be allocated for the rest of the year.

Table 3 – Summary of 2022 Theatre Rental Grants projected funding

2022 Theatre Rental Grants Budget (projected to be the same as 2021)	2,829,608
2022 Theatre Rental Grant Recommendations in this report (Jan. – Aug.)	(1,820,205)
2022 TOTAL THEATRE RENTAL GRANTS BUDGET AVAILABLE TO ALLOCATE FOR Sept. 1 - Dec. 31, 2022	1,009,403

CONCLUSION

Investments in these projects allows organizations to be able to access VCT spaces to continue to program events in safe and new ways, and persevere to an eventual return to pre-pandemic performing arts schedules, productions, and programming. Access to TRG provides viable opportunities to support these groups' efforts to look towards a purposeful road towards restart, recovery, and resiliency, while continuing to support the economic and cultural growth of the city.

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Recommendation A – Sept. 1 – Dec. 31, 2021 Theatre Rental Grant Recommendations

Organization	Sept 1 - Dec 31, 2021 Requested	Sept 1 - Dec 31, 2021 Recommendation
Arts Umbrella Association	29,190	29,190
Asian-Canadian Special Events Association	34,030	34,030
Ballet B.C. (Pacific Ballet British Columbia Society)	155,030	155,030
Circus 3 (Sophisticated Laughter Theatrical Society)	32,340	32,340
Compaigni V'ni Dansi Society	2,960	2,960
DanceHouse (Seismic Shift Arts Society)	35,940	35,940
Erato Ensemble Society	1,480	1,480
Flamenco Rosario (Rosario Ancer Flamenco Arts Society)	1,480	1,480
Friends of Chamber Music*	13,470	13,470
Greater Vancouver International Film Festival Society	182,445	182,445
Holy Crow Arts Society	26,640	26,640
Kara-Kata Afrobeat Society of Canada	14,795	14,795
Karen Flamenco Dance Society	11,230	11,230
Latincouver Cultural & Business Society	14,795	14,795

Music on Main Society	14,800	14,800
Nahualli Folklore Society	1,480	1,480
Raven Spirit Dance Society	5,920	5,920
RE: Naissance Opera	4,440	4,440
Sound of Dragon Society	7,400	7,400
The Borealis String Quartet Society	1,480	1,480
The Coastal Jazz and Blues Society	29,590	29,590
The Vancouver Bach Choir	25,869	25,869
The Vancouver Chopin Society	7,845	7,845
The Vancouver Inter-Cultural Orchestra Society	4,440	4,440
The Vancouver International Writers Festival Society	19,285	19,285
The Vancouver Men's Chorus	11,230	11,230
Turning Point Ensemble	1,480	1,480
Universal Gospel Choir	10,985	10,985
Urban Ink Production Society	40,260	40,260
Vancouver Academy of Music	21,970	21,970

Vancouver Chamber Choir	1,480	1,480
Vancouver International Dance Festival Society	13,480	13,480
Vancouver Latin American Cultural Centre Society	10,985	10,985
Vancouver New Music Society	11,840	11,840
Vancouver Opera Association	136,760	136,760
Vancouver Recital Society	21,265	21,265
Vancouver Seniors' Singing Club Association	1,480	1,480
Vancouver Symphony Society	623,130	623,130
VDC Dance Centre Society	8,880	8,880
VSO School of Music Society	4,490	4,490
Yarilo Contemporary Music Society	1,480	1,480
Total	1,599,569	1,599,569

* SUBJECT TO CONDITION

Recommendation B – Jan. 1 – Aug. 31, 2022 Theatre Rental Grant Recommendations

Organization	Jan 1 - Aug 31, 2022 Requested	Jan 1 - Aug 31, 2022 Recommendation
Aeriosa Dance Society	15,720	8,980
Allegra Chamber Orchestra Society	2,960	1,480
Arts Umbrella Association	44,920	31,430
Asian-Canadian Special Events Association	26,615	10,985
Ballet B.C. (Pacific Ballet British Columbia Society)	132,780	125,445
B.C. Chinese Music Association	4,440	1,480
Blackout Art Society	7,400	4,440
Blueridge Chamber Music Society	5,920	1,480
Circus 3 (Sophisticated Laughter Theatrical Society)	32,340	11,230
City Opera of Vancouver Society	11,250	4,500
DanceHouse (Seismic Shift Arts Society)	76,360	51,670
Doxa Documentary Film Festival (The Documentary Media Society.)	8,980	4,490
Elektra Women's Choir	8,980	4,490
Erato Ensemble Society	2,960	1,480

Flamenco Rosario (Rosario Ancer Flamenco Arts Society)	2,960	1,480
Friends of Chamber Music*	28,025	19,045
Full Circle: First Nations Performance Society	26,060	23,820
Indian Summer Arts Society	23,775	23,775
Latincover Cultural & Business Society	34,185	5,920
PuSH International Performing Arts Festival Society	28,310	26,830
Sound of Dragon Society	10,360	5,920
The Art Starts In Schools Society	5,920	4,440
The Borealis String Quartet Society	1,480	1,480
The Coastal Jazz and Blues Society	166,405	59,180
The Frank Theatre (Screaming Weenie Productions)	10,360	7,400
The Mascall Dance Society	5,920	4,440
The Standing Wave Society	1,480	1,480
The Vancouver Bach Choir	26,540	24,290
The Vancouver Cantata Society	2,960	1,480
The Vancouver Chinese Singers Society	4,490	4,490

The Vancouver Chopin Society	7,845	4,490
The Vancouver Inter-Cultural Orchestra Society	1,480	1,480
The Vancouver International Writers Festival Society	19,285	10,985
The Vancouver Out on Screen Film and Video Society	16,170	13,470
Taiwanese Canadian Cultural Society	7,450	4,490
Turning Point Ensemble	2,960	1,480
Urban Ink Production Society	20,720	17,760
Vancouver Academy of Music	32,955	21,970
Vancouver Asian Film Festival Society	4,490	4,490
Vancouver Chamber Choir	22,385	20,905
Vancouver International Burlesque Festival Association	8,980	8,980
Vancouver International Dance Festival Society	23,840	20,880
Vancouver New Music Society	4,440	2,960
Vancouver Opera Association	292,420	292,420
Vancouver Pro Musica (Pro Musica Society of Vancouver)	2,220	1,480
Vancouver Recital Society	79,855	69,850

Vancouver Seniors' Singing Club Association	10,460	5,970
Vancouver Symphony Society	1,316,715	832,605
VSO School of Music Society	8,980	4,490
Total	2,644,505	1,820,205

* SUBJECT TO CONDITION