



COUNCIL REPORT

Report Date: April 30, 2024
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Meeting Date: May 29, 2024
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TO: Standing Committee on City Finance and Services
FROM: General Manager of Arts, Culture, and Community Services
SUBJECT: Theatre Rental Grant Allocations – Fall 2024 and Spring 2025

Recommendations

- A. THAT Council approve Theatre Rental Grants totaling \$1,275,294 from the 2024 Cultural Grants Operating Budget to the 45 organizations listed in Table A of Appendix A for the amounts recommended in the “Sept 1 – Dec 31, 2024 Recommendation” column to allow organizations to use the Civic Theatres for the September 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024 season.
- B. THAT Council approve, in advance of the 2025 operating budget, Theatre Rental Grants totaling \$1,866,975 from the 2025 Cultural Grants Operating Budget to the 66 organizations listed in Table B of Appendix A for the amounts recommended in the “Jan 1- Aug 31, 2025, Recommendation” column to allow organizations to use the Civic Theatres for the January 1, 2025 - August 31, 2025, season.
- C. THAT Council delegate its authority to execute grant agreements that include terms and conditions that are consistent with this report, that satisfy the City’s Director of Legal Services, and that disburse the grants described in this report to the City’s General Manager of Arts, Culture, and Community Services (or their designate).
- D. THAT, pursuant to Section 206(1)(j) of the *Vancouver Charter*, Council deems any organization listed in Appendix A of this report that is not otherwise a registered charity with Canada Revenue Agency to be contributing to the culture of Vancouver.

- E. THAT no legal rights or obligations will arise or be created by Council's adoption of these Recommendations unless and until all legal documentation has been executed and delivered by the respective parties.

Recommendations A and B require two-thirds affirmative votes of all Council members pursuant to section 206 (1) of the Vancouver Charter.

Purpose and Executive Summary

This report recommends a total of \$1,275,294 to 45 cultural organizations for use of the Vancouver Civic Theatres (VCT) during the Fall 2024 performing arts season that runs from September 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024.

This report recommends a total of \$1,866,975 to 66 cultural organizations for use of the Vancouver Civic Theatres (VCT) during the Spring 2025 performing arts season that runs from January 1, 2025 to August 31, 2025.

The recommendations support the key civic policy and strategic directions including *Culture|Shift: Blanketing the City in Arts and Culture*, the City's 10-year culture plan, including the *Vancouver Music Strategy* and *Making Space for Arts and Culture*.

Council Authority/Previous Decisions

On May 30, 2023 (RTS 15583), Council approved 33 Theatre Rental Grants totalling \$1,349,795 for the period of Sept. 1-Dec. 31, 2023 and 57 Theatre Rental Grants totalling \$1,830,195 for the period of Jan 1-Aug. 31, 2024.

On November 28, 2023 (RTS 15719) Council approved new rental rates for VCT that included both commercial and not-for-profit rental rates for the performing arts season that runs from September 1, 2024 to August 31, 2025.

City Manager's Comments

The City Manager concurs with the foregoing recommendations.

Context and Background

The City of Vancouver has a long history of providing grants to local arts and culture non-profit organizations (NPOs). With that support, the City recognizes the role that arts and culture play in elevating the distinct characteristics of a city. This includes providing access to Vancouver Civic Theatres (VCT), one of the City's cultural assets, providing the NPOs with the opportunity to produce and present local and international artists and creators to residents and visitors of the City.

VCT as a Department within the Arts Culture & Community (ACCS) Business Unit

VCT, one of Canada's preeminent theatre complexes, operates the Orpheum (2,672 seat concert hall), Queen Elizabeth Theatre (2,765 seat proscenium theatre), Vancouver Playhouse (668 seat proscenium theatre), and Annex (191 seat multi-purpose performing arts space) on behalf of the City. In 2023, VCT worked with commercial promoters, NPOs, and community groups, hosting 727 events in all four venues, with 750,024 patrons attending both public assembly and arts and cultural events representing a diverse range of disciplines, performing arts genres, and event types.

VCT enhances the performing arts experience and strengthens the cultural fabric of the City by hosting events that connect patrons and performers. Through state of the art professionally equipped theatres, supported by experienced professional staff, VCT plays an integral role in the cultural and economic health of the City. VCT provides culture enthusiasts with access to an endless array of arts and entertainment productions, including concerts, theatre, classical music, opera, dance, film, lectures and many other varied event types.

Many performing arts centres operate as NPOs and have access to multiple sources of funding (earned, public, and private). VCT, as a municipally owned and operated business, primarily relies on earned revenues from the following areas: venue rentals, VCT programming, food and beverage, facility fees, ticket surcharge, merchandise commission, and parking.

About Theatre Rental Grants (TRG)

TRG are one of the few offset grants that support eligible cultural non-profit producers and presenters to access VCT's iconic, downtown civic venues and associated spaces. Grants to these organizations animate the City's theatres and present a range of culturally diverse performances for the enjoyment of citizens and visitors alike. This program is one of several programs, awards, and services that the City offers to support a diverse and thriving cultural ecology and a still recovering economy.

The TRG program is designed to support Vancouver-based, professional arts and cultural NPOs 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, and visual arts).

This offset 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 to small-sized occasional users. The program objectives are to assist organizations with artistic development, to increase their profile, and to expand their audiences.

If recommendations are approved, for the 2024/2025 TRG Season, VCT will provide access to a diverse range of programming in all disciplines, representing Indigenous, Latin American, South Asian, Asian, Middle Eastern cultures, and others.

The theatre rental grant Program Guide is found online: <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/theatre-rental-grant-information-guide.pdf>

Discussion

Recommendations in this report implement key directions of *Culture/Shift* and build on previous City support and investment in the cultural diversity and economic vitality of the city. The recommendations are for 2024/2025 Performing Arts Season that runs from September 1, 2024 to August 31, 2025.

TRG Assessment Process

The applications were evaluated by a staff team from VCT and Arts & Culture, using the published application criteria, while also 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 Table A Section A (Sept. 1 – Dec. 31, 2024) and Table B (Jan. 1 – Aug. 31, 2025) of Appendix A.

TRG recommendations are awarded on a per usage basis and are equivalent to Council-approved NPO rental rates.

Funds from any grants that cannot be partially or fully used are repurposed and reallocated to eligible but unfunded applicants or new initiatives that meet the TRG funding guidelines.

The recommendations are based on the published program criteria, which include:

- Equitable access to programs and services;
- Confirmed booking at a VCT venue within the 2024/2025 Season;
- Respectful and safe working conditions for artists, staff, volunteers, and contractors;
- Participation, Access and Impact (audiences and participants reflect the diversity of the city; accessibility plans and practices are in place; there is demand for the programs);
- Leadership and Administration (skilled leadership, working with artists and creative collaborators with the relevant lived experience, permission, knowledge, skills, and expertise to lead and contribute to the work); and,
- Have a mix of revenue sources (earned, private and public) for the project.

Grant Recommendations

TRG recommendations, as detailed in the financial implication section, for the 2024/2025 Season are as follows:

- For the 2024/2025 TRG Season, all applicants are being recommended for a grant.
- Year over year requested amounts consistently exceed available funding.
- For the 2024/2025 TRG Season, there were an additional 18 new and returning post pandemic eligible applicants compared to the previous Season (65 in 23/24 and 83 in 24/25).
- The 2024/2025 TRG Season saw an increased need in venue access for capacity and programming for equity-deserving non-profit organizations (NPOs)

- For the Fall 2024, staff are recommending funding 74% of overall requests, as available resources for TRG in 2024 are considerably less than in 2023; this percentage is more in line with that of previous seasons. In 2023 there was a large amount of unallocated TRG from prior years due to the effects of COVID-19 with most Fall 2023 applicants receiving 100% of their request amount.
- For the Spring 2025, staff have recommended funding 71% of overall requests.

The TRG program works within established budgets to both make space for equity deserving and new and returning NPOs while at the same time continuing to support existing groups in their annual programming to provide access to VCT and support operational health.

Table 1 – Key Metrics: Requests vs Recommended

TRG Funding	Requested #	Recomm. \$	%	Requested \$	Recomm. \$	%
Fall 2024	45	45	100	\$1,717,855	\$1,275,294	74
Spring 2025	66	66	100	\$2,636,350	\$1,866,975	71

Financial Implications

As an offset grant program, TRG is an internal transfer from the Arts & Culture Grants budget to the VCT Operating Budget. Council-approved TRG cover the costs of appropriate, approved, eligible event costs and are applied as rental revenue to the VCT Operating Budget. With this investment by Council, TRG events generate other revenue for VCT such as Food and Beverages sales, ticket surcharges, and parking. On average, TRG rental revenues represent approximately half of VCT's annual rental budget.

The 2024 TRG budget is \$2,953,731. In May 2023 (RTS 15583), Council approved in advance of the 2024 budget, grants totalling \$1,830,195 for Spring 2024 events at VCT venues. This Council approval now leaves \$1,123,536 to be allocated in the 2024 TRG budget. The post COVID-19 economic impact effected numerous granted organizations in 2023 with artists cancelling, visa challenges, organizational human resource challenges, and audiences slow return to public performance and as such forced some organizations to cancel or reduce the number of events or move to smaller capacity venues. In an effort retain these events at VCT, \$79,906 of un-allocated TRG has been carried forward to 2024 to maintain utilization of VCT. As of the April 30, 2024, 8 granted organizations have cancelled or will underuse their Spring 2024 approved bookings, thereby making \$72,225 available for reallocation in the Fall 2024 season. This will essentially fully utilize available funding for 2024, leaving a forecasted total of \$373 of TRG to be allocated at the end of 2024, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 – Summary of 2024 Theatre Rental Grants funding

2023 Underused or cancelled Theatre Rental Grants carry forward	79,906
2024 Theatre Rental Grants Budget	2,953,731
2024 Theatre Rental Grants (Jan. – Aug.) allocated May 2024 (RTS 15583)	(1,830,195)
2024 Theatre Rental Grants Spring 2024 cancellations or underuses (forecast as of April 30, 2024)	72,225
TOTAL FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR ALLOCATION	1,275,667
2024 Theatre Rental Grants recommended in this report – Sept. – Dec.	(1,275,294)
2024 FORECASTED THEATRE RENTAL GRANTS BALANCE	373

Staff are therefore recommending 45 grants totalling \$1,275,294 for Sept. 1 - Dec. 31, 2024. The source of funds is the 2024 TRG budget.

This report also requests approval of grants to 65 organizations for VCT uses from Jan 1-Aug 31, 2025, totalling \$1,866,975 in advance of Council’s confirmation of the 2025 operating budget. The source of funds is to be the 2025 Cultural Grants Operating budget. These grants are summarized in Table 3 and listed in Appendix A, Section B. Should the 2025 TRG budget remain the same as 2024 at \$2,953,731, a balance of \$1,086,756 in TRG funds will be allocated for the rest of the year.

Table 3– Summary of 2025 Theatre Rental Grants projected funding

2025 Theatre Rental Grants Budget (projected to be the same as 2024)	2,953,731
2025 Theatre Rental Grant Recommendations in this report (Jan. – Aug.)	(1,866,975)
2025 TOTAL THEATRE RENTAL GRANTS BUDGET AVAILABLE TO ALLOCATE FOR Sept. 1 - Dec. 31, 2025	1,086,756

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications associated with this report’s recommendations.

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APPENDIX A

A. Sept. 1 – Dec. 31, 2024 Theatre Rental Grant Recommendations		
Organization	Sept 1 - Dec 31, 2024 Requested	Sept 1 - Dec 31, 2024 Recommendation
All My Relations Indigenous Society	80,310	80,310
Arts Umbrella Association*	43,920	24,400
Asian-Canadian Special Events Association	9,710	4,880
Blackout Art Society	4,830	3,220
Circus 3 Arts Society (Sophisticated Laughter Theatrical Society)	12,215	12,215
Compaigni V'ni Dansi Society	4,025	4,025
Erato Ensemble Society	1,610	1,610
Folk Star Arts Academy Society	3,030	3,030
Friends of Chamber Music	17,070	12,190
Greater Vancouver International Film Festival Society	168,870	123,744
Karen Flamenco Dance Society	12,210	4,880
Mexican Dance Vancouver Society	4,880	4,880
Music on Main Society	6,440	3,220
Muzewest Concerts Society	3,220	3,220
Nahualli Folklore Society	1,610	1,610
New Old World Music Society*	4,830	4,830
Opera Unbound	3,220	1,610
Pacific Ballet British Columbia Society (Ballet B.C.)	152,495	128,505
RE:Naissance Opera	8,855	8,855
Rosario Ancer Flamenco Arts Society	12,210	9,760
SeeYa Youth Fraternity Foundation	4,880	4,880
Seismic Shift Arts Society (DanceHouse)	34,200	17,090
Sound of Dragon Society	1,610	1,610
TAFF Art Society	3,220	3,220

The Society of We Are Canadians Too	4,830	4,830
The Vancouver Bach Choir	39,840	31,865
The Vancouver Chopin Society	12,190	4,880
The Vancouver International Writers Festival Society	9,760	4,880
The Vancouver Men's Chorus	23,180	14,640
The Vancouver Out On Screen Film and Video Society	9,760	9,760
Turning Point Ensemble	3,220	1,610
Urban Ink Production Society	24,420	24,420
Vancouver Academy of Music	23,890	23,890
Vancouver Cantonese Opera	12,215	9,765
Vancouver Chamber Choir	16,090	16,090
Vancouver Independent Music Centre Society	1,610	1,610
Vancouver Latin American Cultural Centre Society	11,945	11,945
Vancouver Metropolitan Orchestra	11,945	11,945
Vancouver Opera Association	131,990	99,950
Vancouver Recital Society	25,590	15,845
Vancouver Seniors' Singing Club Association.	1,610	1,610
Vancouver Symphony Society	736,435	506,595
Vancouver Tap Dance Society	9,765	4,880
VSO School of Music Society*	6,490	4,880
Yarilo Contemporary Music Society	1,610	1,610
Total	1,717,855	1,275,294

*SUBJECT TO CONDITION

B Jan. 1 – Aug. 31, 2025 Theatre Rental Grant Recommendations		
Organization	Jan 1 - Aug 31, 2025 Requested	Jan 1 - Aug 31, 2025 Recommendation
Aeriosa Dance Society	14,680	7,330
Allegra Chamber Orchestra Society	2,415	1,610
Arts Umbrella Association*	68,385	34,160
Asian-Canadian Special Events Association	28,720	11,945
B.C. Chinese Music Association	3,220	1,610
Belle Spirale Dance Projects Society	14,660	7,330
Blueridge Chamber Music Society*	8,050	3,220
Canada International Arts & Music Society	4,880	4,880
Canadian Music Competitions of British Columbia Society	1,610	1,610
Chor Leoni Choral Society	805	805
Circus 3 Arts Society (Sophisticated Laughter Theatrical Society)	7,330	4,880
City Opera of Vancouver Society	1,610	1,610
Dance//Novella Arts Society	4,025	2,415
DanceHouse (Seismic Shift Arts Society)	63,490	56,140
Dutch Cultural Association of BC	4,025	3,220
Erato Ensemble Society	2,415	1,610
Friends of Chamber Music	26,830	23,175
Heroic Opera Society	8,855	3,220
Indian Summer Arts Society	16,235	13,785
Inverso Productions Society	1,610	1,610
Junior Symphony Society of Vancouver (Vancouver Youth Symphony Orchestra)	11,945	11,945
Karen Flamenco Dance Society	12,210	12,210
Movement Dance Productions Society	12,210	7,330
Music on Main Society	7,245	6,440
Musica Intima Society	2,415	2,415

Muzewest Concerts Society	4,830	3,220
Opera Unbound	7,245	3,220
Pacific Ballet British Columbia Society (Ballet B.C.)	144,390	136,415
Pro Musica Society of Vancouver (Vancouver Pro Musica)	1,610	1,610
Publik Secrets Arts Society	1,610	1,610
PuSH International Performing Arts Festival Society	48,690	33,255
RE:Naissance Opera	6,440	4,025
Renegade Arts Society	8,050	3,220
Rosario Ancer Flamenco Arts Society	1,610	1,610
SeeYa Youth Fraternity Foundation	4,880	4,880
Sound of Dragon Society	4,025	3,220
Taiwanese Canadian Cultural Society	4,880	4,880
The Coastal Jazz and Blues Society	190,180	58,030
The Community Arts Council of Vancouver	1,610	1,610
The Documentary Media Society	9,760	4,880
The Greater Vancouver Vivaldi Chamber Choir Society	11,945	11,945
The Standing Wave Society	3,220	3,220
The Vancouver Bach Choir	21,530	21,530
The Vancouver Cantata Society	2,415	1,610
The Vancouver Chinese Singers Society	4,880	4,880
The Vancouver Chopin Society	15,845	12,190
The Vancouver Inter-Cultural Orchestra Society	4,830	3,220
The Vancouver International Writers Festival Society	1,610	1,610
Turkish-Canadian Society	4,880	4,880
Turning Point Ensemble	6,440	3,220
Vancouver Academy of Music	38,280	23,890
Vancouver Asian Film Festival Society	7,330	4,880

Vancouver Chinese Canadian Seniors Society Of Multicultural Song and Dance	4,880	4,880
Vancouver Choral Arts Society	16,090	11,945
Vancouver International Burlesque Festival Association	9,760	9,760
Vancouver International Dance Festival Society	62,070	32,935
Vancouver Metropolitan Orchestra	16,825	11,945
Vancouver New Music Society	3,220	3,220
Vancouver Opera Association	279,755	247,855
Vancouver Recital Society	49,965	49,965
Vancouver Seniors' Singing Club Association.	4,880	4,880
Vancouver Society for Early Music	17,090	9,760
Vancouver Symphony Society	1,251,635	877,635
Vancouver Tap Dance Society	5,635	3,220
VSO School of Music Society*	20,045	8,100
Yarilo Contemporary Music Society	1,610	1,610
Total	2,636,350	1,866,975

*SUBJECT TO CONDITION