



Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's

Feasibility Study, Phase 1

November 2016

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RE: Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's – Feasibility Study Phase 1

In collaboration with Terence Williams, Architect and Hamilton McClymont, Arts and Entertainment Management Consultant, HCMA Architecture + Design is pleased to present this report to summarize the first phase of the feasibility study for a new Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's Secondary School.

The Society for the Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's engaged the above consultant team to review the feasibility of developing a new performing arts theatre attached to Stelly's Secondary School. In addition to serving as a pedagogical venue for students, the proposed theatre is intended to be a community performance venue. The first phase of this process included a preliminary needs assessment based on an engagement process undertaken with various stakeholders, test for fit analysis on the existing school site and the production of preliminary architectural visualizations of the proposed theatre for marketing and fundraising.

The primary objective of this process was to determine what is realistic and possible, both from the standpoint of the physical constraints of the existing school site and an analysis of the market environment within which the proposed theatre would have to operate.

This report includes details regarding the process undertaken, test for fit analysis on the existing school property, stakeholder engagement process undertaken, benchmarking of various relevant facilities in British Columbia and our analysis of the type and size of facility that would serve the intended users into the future.

Yours truly,
HCMA Architecture + Design

Carl-Jan Rupp, Architect AIBC, OAA, SAA, MRAIC, LEED® Accredited Professional
Principal

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NOVEMBER 2016

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I EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For the last ten years, an enthusiastic group of teachers, parents and students have dreamed about improving the existing performing arts facilities at Stelly's Secondary School through the creation of a new theatre on the school property that would serve the needs of students and the wider community. To forward this vision, the Society for the Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's (the Society) was created under the leadership of Ron Broda, a parent and Jan Heinrichs, a former teacher at the school.

The programs being currently offered attract more than 300 students annually and include dance, drama, acting, musical theatre, concert band, jazz band, vocal jazz, choir, guitar and stagecraft. Currently, the performing arts program uses the multi-purpose room as its classroom and performance space, a situation that has several drawbacks for those involved. The multi-purpose room at Stelly's also serves as an assembly area for the entire school leading to classes being cancelled for school events, has an open connection to the lunch room with associated noise and disturbance and due to its central location is subject to a lot of cross traffic through it. It is not configured in a way that supports the activities taking place within it and is missing adequate technical equipment and support spaces.

While broad support exists among several stakeholders including School District 63 (SD63) and staff for the idea of a new theatre adjacent to the school, the Society recognised that it is critical to review the type and size of performing arts venue that can be supported by the local market in the long term. To undertake this feasibility study, a consultant team comprising of HCMA Architecture + Design (HCMA), Terence Williams Architect (TWA) and Hamilton McClymont, Arts and Entertainment Management Consultant, was brought together with the goal of testing the viability and sustainability of a the proposed Performing Arts Theatre at Stelly's School.

A multi stage process of stakeholder engagement, test for fit analysis, market analysis and theatre benchmarking has been completed by the consultant team with the following conclusions.

1. A 400 seat theatre can be accommodated on the existing school property, located north of the existing band room and should contain the following features.
 - A main chamber containing a fully accessible stage, adequate wing space and an orchestra pit or demi pit.
 - A separate and dedicated rehearsal room of a size equivalent the main stage without wing space.
 - Adequate back of house areas including dressing rooms, a green room, storage and administration spaces.
 - Adequate public spaces and supporting facilities.
 - The band room would be retained or reconstructed adjacent to its current location.
 - The facility would not include a fly tower, catwalks or a balcony.
2. Strong institutional and community support will be required to ensure the success of the proposed theatre and it is recommended that the Society convene a Steering Committee comprised of representatives of the Society, school district and local municipality to guide the next stages of the project.
3. A strong capital campaign will be required to raise required funds for the construction of the proposed theatre. Requirements for such a campaign have been included in the Appendix.
4. A carefully considered operating agreement between the school, municipality and community is also essential to establish operating and financing policies, priority use and booking protocols.

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5. Detailed explorations of zoning changes or shared use agreements that would address the reduction in parking on the site have not been included as part of this study and a complete zoning analysis should be included as part of the detailed design of the theatre.
6. Detailed cost analysis, operating pro forma and governance structure have not been addressed in this phase of the feasibility study and will need to be reviewed as part of phase 2 of the study.
7. The following general characteristics should be carefully considered during detailed design to ensure that a successful performance venue is created.
 - Good sightlines, acoustics and a sense of intimacy.
 - Variable acoustics that can be tuned to meet varied types of performances.
 - Good technical systems to support the different types of performances anticipated.



Conceptual Exterior Rendering of the Proposed Theatre



Conceptual Interior Rendering of the Proposed Theatre

II PROJECT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

Project Phases and Scope

To ensure that the feasibility of the project is tested both from a physical and operational perspective, the broad scope of the feasibility study includes a process of engagement with various stakeholders, test for fit analysis on the existing site, analysis of the market within which the proposed theatre would need to operate, development of a list of functional spaces, development of an operating pro forma and a cost analysis of the proposed theatre.

However, to better align with the funding available for the study, it was agreed that the above scope would be split into two phases. Phase 1 would include the engagement process, test for fit analysis, preliminary market assessment, development of the list of functional spaces and production of preliminary architectural visualizations for marketing and fundraising. Phase 2 would include the development of a more detailed operating pro forma, collection of information for costing and a process of preliminary cost estimating to determine the capital investment required.

Project Methodology

For phase 1 of the project, the following steps were undertaken through the process to ensure that the consultant team had a broad assessment of the existing situation and an opportunity to communicate with a range of potential stakeholders in the proposed theatre.

1. Initial Meetings with the Society and Site Review

This meeting at Stelly's Secondary School was a means for the consultant team to meet with several stakeholders, tour the school and property and review the existing situation at the multi-purpose room. The groups represented at the meeting included the Society, School District 63 and current staff. Each person was asked to outline their vision for the project and any specific requirements that they felt were critical to its success. The consultant team also requested that the group describe the size of venue that they felt would be appropriate for this situation and responses to this question ranged from a 300 seat venue to an 800 seat venue.

The meeting was followed by a tour of the building and site to review existing conditions and issues. The existing multi-purpose room was the focus of the tour and the consultant team was briefed about the varied issues within the space. The three potential locations for the project that were to be studied as part of the test for fit analysis were also visited by the group and existing conditions at each possible location were documented.

2. Test for Fit Analysis

Since a very wide range of possible theatre sizes was discussed at the initial meetings, a crucial first step for the consultant team was to determine whether the existing site would constrain the number of seats that could be accommodated within the proposed theatre. It was also important to outline the benefits and challenges of each of the three proposed locations for the theatre.

Details regarding the process and conclusions for this stage of the project are included in Chapter 3 of this report.

3. Stakeholder Engagement

With an understanding of the physical constraints of the existing site and building gained through the test for fit analysis, the next step was for Hamilton McClymont, the Arts and

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Entertainment Management Consultant to review the proposed theatre with possible stakeholders and document the market situation within which the proposed theatre would need to operate.

Meetings and workshops were held over three days with representatives of the Society, School District 63, the local municipality, the local business community staff and the local performing arts community that could serve as future users of the proposed theatre.

4. Market Analysis and Theatre Options

At the end of the stakeholder engagement process, a detailed report containing a preliminary analysis of the regional marketplace for performing arts was presented to the Society. The report also outlined four possible theatre configurations, an analysis of the benefits and challenges of each and a recommendation about whether these were feasible from a physical and operational standpoint. The report provided to the Society is included in the Appendix.

Of the four suggested options, two were considered to have merit and it was recommended that they be reviewed by a Steering Committee composed of representatives of the Society, School District and local municipality prior to determining a preferred option to be studied further in phase 2 of the project.

5. Theatre Benchmarking

Through further review with the Society, it became clear that additional information was required prior to determining a preferred option for phase 2 of the project. In an attempt to study similar situations and inform the selection, a process of benchmarking relevant examples of community theatres attached to schools was undertaken by Hamilton McClymont.

Details regarding the benchmarking process undertaken and insights gained are included in Chapter 5 and the Appendix of this report.

6. Listing of Functional Spaces and Visualizations

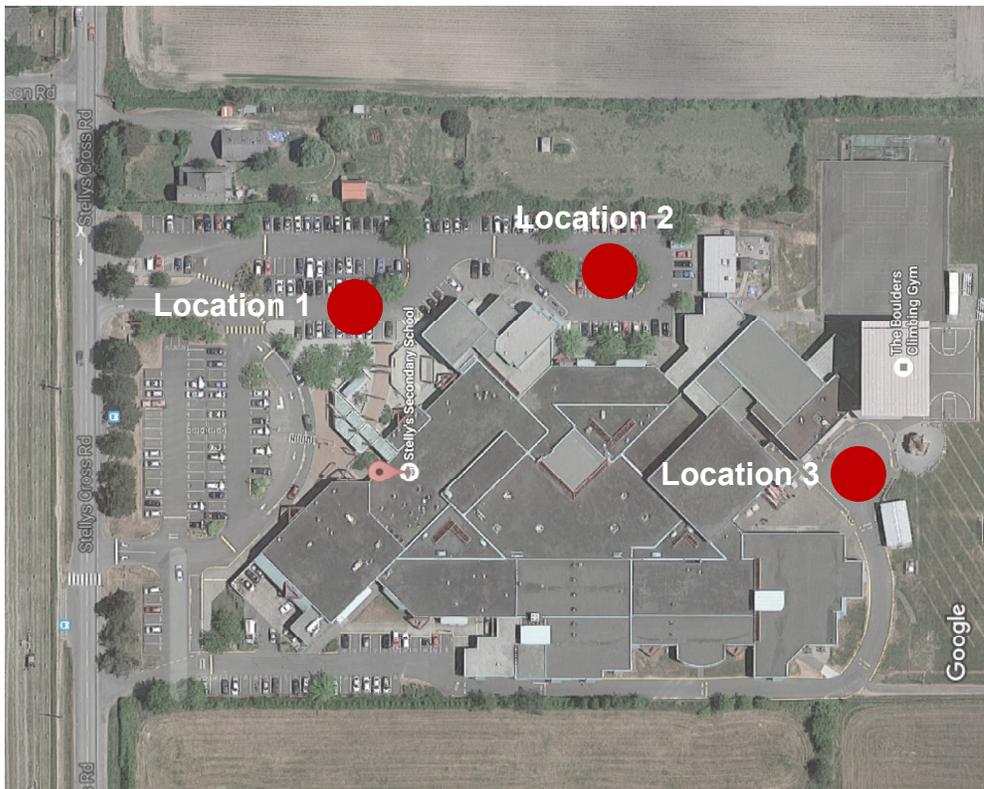
To complete phase 1 of the project, the consultant team developed a list of functional spaces and preliminary architectural visualizations for the proposed theatre. These are intended to serve the Society as they begin marketing and fundraising efforts for the proposed theatre.

III TEST FOR FIT ANALYSIS

Locations Reviewed

The test for fit analysis was carried out for the existing school site to review potential locations for the proposed theatre and determine the feasibility and size of performance venue that could be accommodated. Since there were differing thoughts on the size of the proposed theatre, it was critical to confirm whether the constraints of the existing site and building would limit this. Through our initial discussions with the Society and staff, three potential locations on the site were reviewed.

- Location 1 – This location occupied a section of the parking lot to the north east of the school entry.
- Location 2 – This location occupied the parking lot to the east of the existing school building and north of the existing day care.
- Location 3 – This location occupied the area around the cul-de-sac at the south of the existing school building and to the west of the climbing gym.



Aerial Image Showing Three Locations Reviewed

Analysis and Selected Location

A careful analysis was carried out for each of the three locations that considered accessibility for the public, vehicular access for loading and unloading, connectivity to the school and the extents of required modifications to the existing building and site to accommodate the proposed theatre.

- Location 1 – This location occupies existing parking areas and abuts a mostly inaccessible and solid section of the school façade. It is close to the street and adjacent to the existing main entry to the school building which are essential to ensure easy access for both students and the public. Additionally, it is directly adjacent to the arts wing of the existing school and

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would allow connectivity between existing and new facilities. To accommodate a theatre at this location, the existing amphitheatre would need to be removed, the band room possibly relocated and some critical building services such as the transformer, gas meter, sprinkler room and electrical room would need to be relocated.

- Location 2 – This location occupies a very limited amount of site between the existing building and the property line, raising severe constraints to the size of the proposed theatre. Being in a dead end situation would also limit opportunities for access to a loading dock away from the front entry. While its location would allow connectivity between the existing arts wing and the new theatre, this option would remove access to natural light and ventilation for several existing rooms within the school building and severely constrain access to the day care facility.
- Location 3 – While this location is not very constrained in size due to the presence of the playing fields directly adjacent to it, the vehicular access to the climbing gym would need to be removed or reconfigured. A theatre at this location would greatly constrict the access from the existing building to the playing fields. It is located far away from the school entry and would give rise to challenges when considering access for the public. Additionally, it is located far away from the existing arts facilities within the school and creating connectivity within between existing and new facilities would be difficult.

Test for Fit Analysis

The decision was made in consultation with members of the Society to pursue location 1 as the intended site for the proposed theatre and to perform the test for fit analysis at this location.

The test for fit process involved an attempt to configure a performing arts theatre of an assumed size at the selected location and aimed to determine the largest possible theatre that could be accommodated. We began by testing an 800 seat theatre, modeled on the Port Theatre in Nanaimo, at the selected location as this represented the upper end of the range of sizes that were mentioned during our initial meetings.

Parking

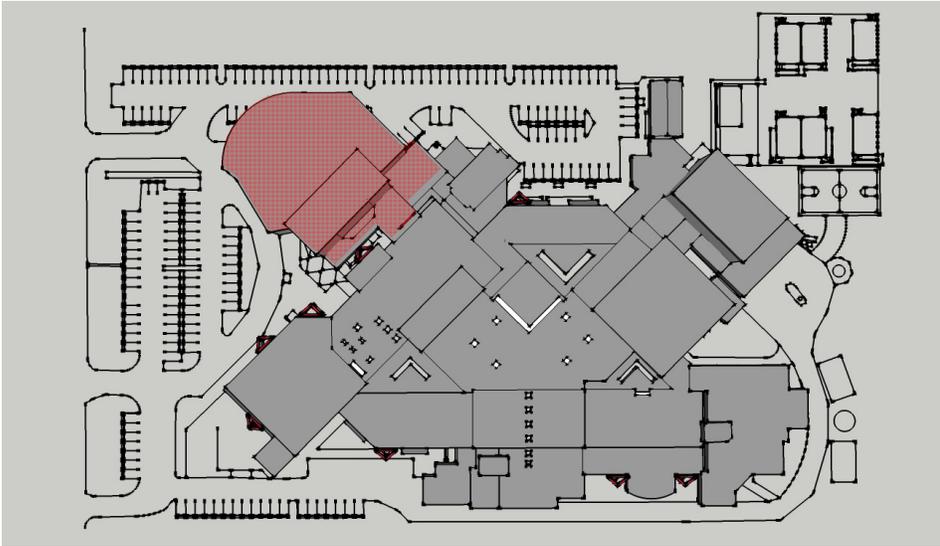
The construction of a theatre at location 1 will require the removal of approximately 40 parking stalls from the site. This reduction will need to be carefully reviewed during the detailed design of the theatre, both from the perspective of zoning regulations and the provision of adequate quantities for all users. It is understood that opportunities to expand parking exist at the south end of the school site or through a joint use agreement with adjacent sites and these measures will also need further review during the detailed design of the theatre.

Conclusion

Our analysis of location 1 determined that an 800 seat performing arts theatre would be a possible but difficult fit at that location. While the required audience chamber and stage with adequate wing space would fit, back of house spaces and public spaces would be limited by the constraints of vehicular circulation to the east and the existing building to the south of the proposed theatre.

In addition the above limitations, the existing band room would need to be sacrificed to accommodate a theatre of that size. A separate rehearsal space sized to match the proposed stage would also not fit at its ideal location adjacent to the stage.

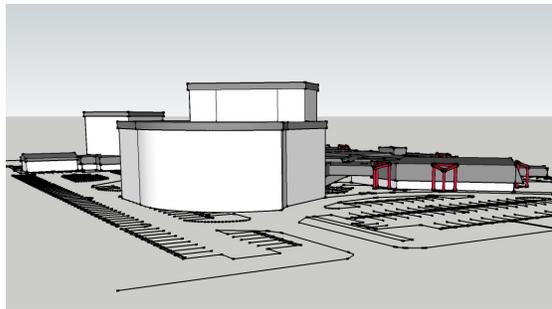
The consultant team thus does not recommend proceeding with a theatre of this size at the proposed location.



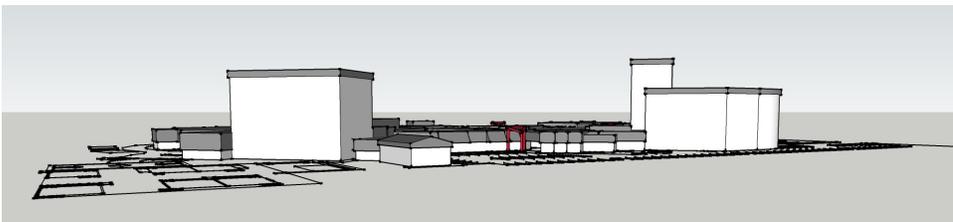
View from Above Showing 800 Seat Theatre in Red



View from Above



Street View



View Showing Theatre in Relation to Climbing Gym

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IV MARKET ANALYSIS AND THEATRE OPTIONS

Summary of Observations

Members of the consultant team were involved in a series of meetings and conversations with board members of The Society for the Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's, staff at Stelly's Secondary School, representatives of School District 63 (SD63) and members of the regional arts community, during the early part of February 2016. These meetings were intended to be a forum for all parties whose support would be critical to the success of the proposed Community Arts Theatre, to express their thoughts, needs and vision for it. The consultant team were eager listeners to all opinions expressed and the information gained through these discussions set the base for the next steps of study and recommendations.

A report was prepared by Hamilton McClymont that included an analysis of all the information collected during the three days of meetings. An analysis of the market situation that the proposed theatre would encounter was included, containing existing and proposed performing arts venues within the Capital Regional District (CRD). This information was used to determine whether a gap was present in the inventory of performing arts venues that could be filled by the proposed theatre. Additionally, the report outlined findings on potential support for the proposed theatre from the local municipality and performing arts groups across the CRD. The complete report presented to the Society is included in the Appendix.

Based on an analysis of all the above information, four possible theatre configurations were proposed:

Option 1

This option, modeled on the Port Theatre in Nanaimo, included an 800 seat theatre, based on the size that was studied in the test for fit exercise for the project. Additional facilities included a balcony, a fly tower, a full stage with sprung floor, an orchestra pit, sufficient back of house support spaces, a rehearsal hall and adequate public spaces. This option was not recommended due to the difficulty it would have filling seats, limitations on adjacent parking and concerns among stakeholders about the feasibility of building and operating a venue of this size.

Option 2

This option, modeled on the Richmond Gateway Theatre and the ACT Theatre in Maple Ridge, included a 500 seat theatre with all other facilities suggested in option 1. It was an option that generated enthusiasm among Stelly's staff, representatives of SD 63 and some arts groups. However, the consultant team outlined a few concerns with this model that included competition with other CRD facilities, required capital investment and high operational costs.

Option 3

This Option, modeled on the Frank Venables Theatre, included a 400 seat theatre over one raked level and represents a theatre primarily for community use integrated into Stelly's Secondary School. Additional facilities included a stage with sprung floor and adequate backstage support but a fly tower and orchestra pit were excluded. This model was recommended for further study in phase 2 and was considered to have a good possibility of success if an optimum operating agreement can be signed between the school district, local government and the community.

Option 4

This option, intended to be an unabashedly educational facility, consists of a venue with 350-400 seats in a flexible configuration. A "T" plan could be employed to ensure that wing space is available when used in the traditional proscenium configuration. Additional facilities included a cable grid for lighting and sound, adequate backstage support, a separate rehearsal room, a separate band room and adequate public space. This model was recommended for further study

in phase 2 as it would provide a unique facility type within the CRD and provide varied pedagogical opportunities.

As there was limited budget available to study both options further during phase 2, the report suggested that option 3 and option 4 be reviewed by the Society against the original objectives of the project and a decision be made regarding which option best suited the perceived needs of all stakeholders. A process of benchmarking other theatres attached to schools across British Columbia was also proposed, to gain a better understanding of varied facilities and modes of operation that currently exist.

Additionally, the report recommended that the Society convene the Steering Committee for the project that would consist of representative from the school district, the District of Central Saanich and the Society Board. Once convened, the Steering Committee would review the Society's goals, review the recommendations contained within the report and determine which option best suited the future needs of all stakeholders.

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V THEATRE BENCHMARKING

Process

The benchmarking process was undertaken by Hamilton McClymont to study relevant examples of community theatres located in schools, with a goal of gaining a detailed understanding of the physical nature of those theatres and their operational model. Ten theatres attached to schools in southern British Columbia were asked to provide information under the following headings:

- Ownership, governance, management, program format
- Protocol for determining priority between school and community bookings
- Facilities (type, capacity, support, ancillary operations)
- Theatre events (school & community events, attendance)
- How the numbers work (budget, bottom line responsibility, major maintenance and capital)
- Staffing
- Factors for success

Detailed information gleaned from the process, including the responses provided by the management of each of the contacted venues is included in the Appendix.

Conclusions

The benchmarking process provided several insights into the programmatic considerations that would be critical for the success of the theatre as both a school and community theatre. Providing a separate and dedicated rehearsal space and not compromising the band room were two items that were determined through this process. A carefully considered operating agreement between the school, municipality and community is also essential to establish operating and financing policies, priority use and booking protocols.

However, the benchmarking process did not provide further insight into strategies for dealing with the market condition within which the proposed theatre would have to operate. Similar size theatres that were studied exist in communities of a different size and in situations where not much competition is present.

Broad support from the local government, school district and community is a necessity to ensure that the proposed theatre is successful. It is thus critical that the Steering Committee comprised of members of the Society along with representatives of the above organizations be convened to review the options further and determine a preferred option to study further in phase 2 of the project.

VI DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED THEATRE FOR PHASE 1

To conclude phase 1 of the project, the consultant team has outlined the characteristics of a theatre that would address the needs of the arts programs at Stelly's Secondary School and the wider community.

A theatre with around 400 seats can be accommodated on the school property and is a size that can meet the needs of the school and the local performing arts community. This facility would have the following characteristics:

- A main chamber containing a fully accessible stage with adequate wing space on both sides.
- Careful consideration given to good sightlines, acoustics and a sense of intimacy.
- Variable acoustics that can be tuned to meet varied types of performances.
- An orchestra pit or demi pit that would accommodate approximately 23-25 musicians in front of the stage. The provision of a mechanized lift to convert this area into a thrust stage can be considered during detailed design.
- Good technical systems to support the different types of performances anticipated.
- A balcony is not recommended for a theatre of this size.
- A fly tower and catwalks are not recommended for the theatre, though a cable grid system can be provided for lighting.

Carefully configured and designed public spaces are also an essential part of the theatre experience. A separate entrance lobby that is located adjacent to the main school entry is recommended. Adequate accommodation should be made for the sale of refreshments and for well sized audience support spaces.

Adequate back of house areas including dressing rooms with showers, a green room, storage and administration spaces are critical to the smooth operation of the proposed theatre.

A separate and dedicated rehearsal room of a size equivalent the main stage without wing space should be included. The space can be designed not just as a rehearsal hall but as a flexible flat floor performance space, with consideration given to public access, performer support and technical capability. In addition to this, a separate band room should be included in the facility, either retained in its current location or reconstructed adjacent to it.

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VII APPENDIX

01 Final Report – Prepared by Hamilton McClymont, A&E Management Consulting



Hamilton McClymont

REPORT ON A COMMUNITY ARTS THEATRE AT STELLY'S

30 September, 2016

SUMMARY

The Society for a Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's (the Society) aims to build a theatre attached to Stelly's Secondary School in Central Saanich. The facility is intended to serve the community as well as the school. The Society has specified a proscenium theatre with a sprung stage and wings adequate for dance, a playing area for musicians, necessary backstage spaces and administrative spaces, and a rehearsal studio.

The Society commissioned Terence Williams Architect and HCMA Architects + Design to undertake a study to determine the feasibility of the project. Hamilton McClymont was asked to assess the marketplace, benchmark a number of other theatres attached to schools, consider how such a theatre at Stelly's might operate and outline a plan to raise the capital for the project.

The full report follows. Here we provide a brief summary.

THE CRD PERFORMING ARTS MARKET

As the major urban area on Vancouver Island, the Capital Regional District (CRD) is reasonably well endowed with performance facilities. The largest tend to be in the downtown core (the Royal Theatre, the Macpherson Playhouse, Alix Goolden Hall)) or not far from it (the Farquhar Auditorium). In the core are also located a number of smaller venues. Furthest from downtown, and 11 kms north of Stelly's Secondary where the Society plans to build a theatre is the Mary Winspear Centre, home of the Charlie White Theatre. Half a dozen local secondary schools have performance spaces, some newer and better than others.

The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria plans to renovate its facility and is currently campaigning to raise the \$21 million required. This is the major cultural fundraising campaign in the region at the present time. In the Western Communities there is a proposal to build the West Shore Centre for the Performing Arts, but little has been done since a feasibility study was produced three years ago.

Demographics show that the Western Communities are the fastest growing area in the region while Central Saanich, its development constrained by agricultural land, is forecast to be the slowest growing area.

The CRD is currently reviewing its cultural strategy. At present the CRD has programs to support operations and projects, but none for capital. The CRD supports the operations of the Royal and the Macpherson. Sydney, North Saanich and to a limited extent Central Saanich support the Mary Winspear. Central Saanich does not participate in the CRD's culture function.

Two options were suggested to the Society at the conclusion of the first phase of the project.

A community theatre of up to 400 seats, in a fixed seat proscenium configuration modeled on the Frank Venable Theatre in Oliver.



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A Performing Arts Learning & Practice Centre at Stelly's, up to 400 seats in a flexible, flat floor arrangement.

The Society remained committed to the traditional proscenium configuration, believing it to be a more attractive proposition for the community, and capable of attracting more funding.

This phase concluded with recommendations to

- convene a steering committee proposed by the Society and comprised of representatives from the School District and the District of Central Saanich for the committee's input
- monitor the progress of the Western Shore Performing Arts Centre Project
- Benchmark more theatres attached to schools

BENCHMARKING THEATRES IN SCHOOLS

Ten theatres attached to schools in southern British Columbia were asked to provide information under the following headings

- Ownership, governance, management, program format (rent/present)
- Protocol for determining priority between school and community bookings
- Facilities (type, capacity, support, ancillary operations)
- Theatre events (school & community events, attendance)
- How the numbers work (budget, bottom line responsibility, major maintenance and capital)
- Staffing
- Factors for success

The exercise provided some very useful information, particularly regarding details helpful in the development of the architectural program. Two clear points emerged. A rehearsal studio must be included in the project to ensure that the school's teaching program is served. In addition, the project must not compromise the existing Band Room, which is also essential to the school's performing arts program.

Benchmarking did not offer any aid in dealing with the market situation a Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's would find itself in, it did not inform the issue of financing the building of a theatre onto an old school. Local government capital and operating support for most theatres attached to schools underlined the problem the Stelly's project faces with Central Saanich.

The Society continued in its belief that a traditional proscenium theatre is the best option to serve the community.

OPERATING PLAN

Factors for success, uncovered in the benchmarking exercise, were used to inform the development of an operating plan for the Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's.

An independent non-profit society was recommended to provide governance and management for the facility, under the terms of an agreement between the Society, the School District and the Municipality (provided it got on board).



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An outline for professional management supported by a mix of contractor and volunteers was proposed, along with options for the box office operation.

Programming based primarily on rentals and supplemented with presentations (in which the Society would share some risk with promoters) and a marketing effort in support was described.

Developing a venue of distinctive design, creatively and uniquely programmed to attract performing artists and draw a regional audience are the major challenges to be met.

In the absence of a design for the theatre, operating numbers could not be calculated, but it is clear from the benchmarking that an annual shortfall on operations should be expected, likely in the six figure range. This is also a significant challenge.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT, RAISING CAPITAL

The final chapter of the report describes the tools that will have to be developed to generate broad-based community support for a Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's.

A capital funding strategy is outlined which elaborates on building "The Case" for the project, calculating "The Target" amount that will have to be raised to build the facility, and a process (campaign readiness study) to assess whether a campaign can realistically generate the required amount.

An outline for a capital campaign plan, its organization and implementation milestones is included.

CONCLUSION

Many theatres attached to schools operate successfully in British Columbia. Often, the school is the only place in a community where there are sufficient resources to locate a theatre. To some extent, the needs of the community and the school can both be met, though there are always issues to be addressed.

The Society faces several challenges to its goal of building a Community Arts Theater at Stelly's.

The Market - The school is located in a rural enclave surrounded by a large urban area which is well served by performance facilities of many capacities and configurations, including half a dozen in secondary schools. A Community Theatre at Stelly's will have to compete for attractions and audiences in this marketplace. It can only do so if it is designed so distinctively, and its programming positioned in the marketplace so uniquely that it will be able to penetrate the market and compete with the other venues in the marketplace for artists and audiences.

Ongoing Institutional Support - Community theatres in schools need support from either or both the school district and the local municipality to be successful. Without such support they cannot be sustained. The Society must convince the School District and the District of Central Saanich to provide meaningful, ongoing support to the Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's.

Capital Costs - Theatres, even those attached to schools, are not cheap to build. Several million dollars will have to be raised.

The plans outlined in this report are intended to help the Society meet these challenges.



Hamilton McClymont

CHAPTER 1 – THE CRD PERFORMING ARTS MARKET

15 March, 2016

INTRODUCTION

In 2012, recognizing that the Multi-Purpose Room at Stelly's Secondary School was a less than adequate facility for teaching performing arts students, a small group decided to explore the possibility of developing a proper performance space at the school. This little band of enthusiasts had seen what a dedicated group could do – in a decade and a half a similar group had conceived the idea, raised the money and built the Boulders Climbing Gym at Stelly's SS – an effort which paid off with being awarded the 2013 World Youth Climbing Championships. This remarkable addition to Stelly's has helped to invigorate the school, which was built in the 1970s and looks it.

Under the leadership of Ron Broda, the Society for a Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's (the Society) was incorporated and the members began their work. To establish what form the facility ought to take, what amenities it should have, and what pitfalls to avoid, they studied a number of other theatres, some attached to schools, some not. Here's the list:

- Charlie White Theatre, Mary Winspear Centre
- Ridge Playhouse, Claremont Secondary School
- Belfry Theatre
- McPherson Playhouse
- Royal Theatre
- Port Theatre, Nanaimo
- Grosvenor Theatre, Kay Meek Centre, West Vancouver
- Michael J Fox Theatre, Burnaby South Secondary School
- Gil Bunch Centre, Brentwood College

From this investigation, the members of the society concluded that a Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's should be a state of the art facility for both school and community use, accommodating all types of events from intimate gatherings to full scale musical/theatrical productions. In order to create the best possible theatre experience, the Society specified the following features:

- A mid-sized seating capacity in the range of 500-800
- A main floor with a balcony that may be blocked off
- Separate rehearsal space equal to the size of the main performance area
- Fly tower
- Orchestra pit
- Sprung dance floor
- Wing and backstage areas
- Dressing and green rooms
- Large lobby with gallery and gathering space
- Box office

Such a theatre, they suggested, would be a well used community asset. "Audiences will enjoy many varied and memorable experiences that can only be provided in a facility that has the



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acoustical and technical merits of a professionally designed performance hall.”, it says on Society’s website. (The Society’s list of possible events is quoted later in this report).

The Society recognized that it needed a professional feasibility study to review and hopefully validate its aspirations. The Society said that the study should

- determine what is realistic and possible in terms of
 - the accommodation of the physical facility on the site
 - an activity program that can be sustainable in the regional marketplace
- provide a preliminary visual representation of the facility
- estimate capital and operating costs
- establish the business case for the project, an essential fundraising tool.

Availability of funds required the study to be phased; this first phase covers the first two bullets.

The Society chose Terence Williams Architect and HCMA Architects + Design, both of Victoria along with theatre consultant Hamilton McClymont to undertake the study, and having raised sufficient resources with generous help from School District 63, ordered the first phase of the study to begin.

To date HCMA Architects + Design has prepared a preliminary functional program, a site plan and some massing SketchUps intended to demonstrate the physical capacity of the site to accommodate the facilities specified by the Society.

To understand the issues, challenges and opportunities presented by the project, the consulting team (Terence Williams, Zubin Shroff representing HCMA and Hamilton McClymont) met early in February, 2016 with the Society board, Stelly’s SS staff, SD 63 staff and Trustees, and with members of the regional arts community. This report is indebted to these people for their spirited participation.

CURRENT MARKET, NEEDS ANALYSIS

Population

Stelly’s Secondary School is situated on rural land in the District of Central Saanich, a community of about 16,700 situated a half hour drive north of BC’s capital city on Vancouver Island. About 60% of the land in the municipality is in the Agricultural Land Reserve, severely limiting opportunity for development.

Central Saanich is one of three municipalities on the “Peninsula” along with Sidney and North Saanich. Together these three communities comprise about 42,700 people. The Peninsula is the least populated area of the Capital Regional District (CRD), where the total is about 378,200.

The CRD comprises thirteen municipalities, two rural areas and a number of First Nations Reserves. The densest concentration of people is in the “Core”, dominated by the Cities of Saanich (113,500) and Victoria (83,700). The “West Shore” is the fastest growing area of the CRD. For example, the population of the City of Colwood is expected to nearly double from 16,600 to 30,200 in the next ten years. The forecast for growth in the same period for Central Saanich is estimated at a relatively small 6%, to 17,700 (100 people per year).



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Performing Arts Venues, Producers and Presenters

The region contains about eight and a half thousand seats in performing arts facilities of various sizes (not including Save-On-Foods Memorial Centre, Victoria's arena, which would nearly double this figure). Most facilities are in the City of Victoria; some are within walking distance of the Legislative precinct.

The **Royal Theatre**, opened in 1910, is a 1,400 seat opera house now owned and supported by the CRD. It has its limitations, particularly in relation to what is considered "state of the art" technology, as far as its orchestra pit, backstage support and public spaces are concerned, but it continues to serve **Victoria Symphony Orchestra (VSO)**, **Pacific Opera Victoria (POV)** and their audiences reasonably well. POV is thriving, in part because of the success of its new rehearsal studio and education/office facility, the Baumann Centre. VSO is currently making changes in its artistic and management leadership.

The **McPherson Playhouse**, also opened in 1910, is a fully equipped theatre of just under 800 seats, owned and funded by the City of Victoria. "The Mac", once home to **Bastion Theatre** (which, sadly, is no more), operates as a rental and presentation house.

The Royal Theatre and the McPherson Playhouse are the largest theatres in the region and both are managed by the Royal & McPherson Theatres Society (RMTS), a not-for-profit society which operates them for their owners. Other local organizations that call the Royal and the Mac home are **Ballet Victoria**, **Dance Victoria**, **Kaleidoscope Theatre**, **Victoria Operatic Society** and **Victoria Jazz Society**.

RMTS' annual report for 2014 outlines levels of usage as follows:

Use Days	5-year average	FY 2014
Royal Theatre	231	227
McPherson Playhouse	192	99
Combined	423	326

By industry standards, the Royal is well employed. Use of the McPherson has slipped, which speaks to the difficulty of keeping busy a theatre of its capacity and cost structure.

Originally built as a Baptist church in 1887, the **Belfry Theatre** initially rented the sanctuary, then bought the building and rebuilt the venue as a theatre in 1992. In the past 30 years the company has mounted 230 productions, including 158 Canadian plays. Belfry is a going concern, producing up to 12 plays each season from August to May, and is comfortable in its space.

Established as the Victoria School of Music in 1964, it became the **Victoria Conservatory of Music** four years later. In 1997 the organization purchased the century old Metropolitan United Church, and in two years transformed it into classrooms, teaching studios, performance areas and office space. The sanctuary became **Alix Golden Hall**, a fine concert venue of 800 seats which is well used by the Conservatory for its own programs and rentals; management reports it is busy about 250 nights per year. A smaller venue, the **Wood Recital Hall** (100 seats) is also available.



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A gym in the Conservatory complex has been leased to **Intrepid Theatre** who operate it as **The Metro**, a flexible theatre space of up to 180 seats. Intrepid produces the annual Fringe Festival in September, as well as the Uno-Fest and OUTages festival events, along with some individual productions.

Blue Bridge Theatre at the Roxy is a fairly new (since 2008) professional undertaking. This (summer) season they will produce three plays in the 260 seat Roxy, a former cinema.

The **Victoria Theatre Guild and Dramatic School** has a pedigree going back to 1929. This successful community theatre has been performing at **Langham Court Theatre** (177 seats) since the days of WWII. Six productions are offered this season, from September to June.

A quarter of an hour drive from downtown Victoria, at the University of Victoria, is the other major concert hall in the region, the 1200 seat **Farquhar Auditorium** at University Centre. In addition to concerts by students and faculty of the University's Music Department, the **Victoria Symphony Orchestra** presents a portion of its season at the Farquhar. University Centre also presents touring artists. Bookings are strong, particularly on weekends, from October to June. The Farquhar is the most popular grad ceremony facility on Vancouver Island.

University of Victoria's Theatre Department has three performance spaces under the banner **Phoenix Theatre**. The Bishop is a 207 seat proscenium house, the Chief Dan George is a 208 seat thrust theatre and the 108 seat McIntyre is a black box facility. These are teaching theatres and are used for student productions.

Furthest from downtown Victoria is the **Charlie White Theatre** at the **Mary Winspear Centre** in Sidney. This fifteen-year old theatre (315 seats) is making its mark on the entertainment landscape of the region. In addition to being the home to local performance groups (**Peninsula Players, Peninsula Singers, Sidney Concert Band**), the Centre is becoming increasingly adventurous in its programming (Jann Arden, Theo Fleury). Management is investigating the possibility of adding seats to bring capacity up to about 330.

The last purpose built concert hall in Victoria is the Farquhar Auditorium (80s). The most recent purpose built theatre is the Charlie White at the Mary Winspear Centre. You have to go back more than 100 years to the McPherson Playhouse to find another purpose built theatre. All the other facilities are adaptations, mostly of churches.

Of these facilities, only RMTS, Farquhar Auditorium and Mary Winspear Centre are listed as presenting organizations with BC Touring Council. These are the venues which bring touring acts to the region.

Of the facilities which can be rented, all have capacity for more events, some more than others.

Performance venues in secondary schools

The remaining performance facilities in the region are in secondary schools. Were this study being done for a proposed community theatre building not attached to a school, these school venues would garner just a footnote. The project under consideration is for a performance facility at Stelly's Secondary, so other school theatres require some attention. While somewhat available for community use, their prime purpose is to support pedagogy in drama, acting, musical theatre, dance and music.



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This list may not be comprehensive, but it is a good sample. It reflects those which were identified during interviews as being worthy of the study team's attention.

Three are quite new having been completed in the past two years:

- Dave Dunnet Community Theatre @ Oak Bay High School, SD 61 (Victoria)
- Royal Bay Secondary, SD 62 (Colwood)
- Belmont Secondary, SD 62 (Langford)

Unsurprisingly, these new facilities are built where the population is densest and growing most rapidly.

The others harken back to the 70s.

- Isabelle Reader @ Spencer Middle School, SD 62 (Langford)
- Ridge Playhouse @ Claremont Secondary– SD 63 (Saanich)
- theatre upgrade via '94 Commonwealth Games
- Parkland Secondary, SD 63 (Sidney)

The Multi-Purpose Room (MPR) at Stelly's is also of 70s vintage. Of the facilities listed, Stelly's is the poor cousin. Its MPR is the least satisfactory for community use, and less than adequate as a teaching space. Stelly's Performing Arts program would benefit from a facility upgrade.

Cultural facilities being planned

Two projects, one in the planning approvals stage, the other on hold with a three-year old favourable feasibility study at hand, will have impacts on the marketplace.

Art Gallery of Greater Victoria

The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria has been in its present location since 1951. The Gallery owns its facilities and the land they are situated on; it houses the largest public collection of art in the province. The Gallery is celebrated for its East Asian collection. For many years, the Gallery investigated the possibility of moving closer to the downtown core in order to become more accessible. After decades of difficulties in realizing this dream, the Gallery has determined to stay where it is and rebuild its facilities in place. The plan is well advanced. Architects have been at work, an application for rezoning is being processed by the City of Victoria. A capital campaign will soon be organized. Once launched, it will be the dominant fundraising campaign for an arts project in the region. Any other efforts to raise capital for an arts project will likely have to stand aside until the Gallery campaign is complete.

West Shore Centre for the Performing Arts and Bay Royal Theatre

In 2002 the CRD's Regional Arts Strategic Plan (RASP) identified a deficiency in cultural infrastructure in the Western Communities, specifically that there was no arts and culture centre. The West Shore Arts Council reflected this gap in its 2005 strategy, and a year later the West Shore Chamber of Commerce rallied to the arts centre cause. In 2008 the City of Colwood promulgated a new Official Community Plan (OCP) in which the arts and culture were identified as important, and the City has been supporting the arts since. In 2011 a Royal Roads MBA candidate produced an assessment of the facility needs of the arts and culture community which informed a feasibility study for an arts centre project commissioned by the City of Colwood from Shick Shiner & Associates, which study was received by the City in 2013. In 2014 the Juan De



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Fuca Performing Arts Centre Society was formed to “to plan, promote, develop, construct and operate a performing arts facility”. The new Society and the West Shore Arts Council conducted a West Shore Arts Forum at the end of February to bring the community up to date on progress and to solicit support for this project. The report on the Forum is appended to this report.

Specified in the feasibility study is a 650 seat proscenium theatre equipped with a fly tower and orchestra pit, a 240 seat black box multi-purpose space, dance studios, retail and a number of enterprises intended to help pay the operating bills for the facility. Capital expense is forecast to be in the area of \$35 million (2013 dollars).

The West Shore project would make a considerable impact on the performing arts facility inventory of the region. If it is successfully launched, there will not likely be room in the region for another community performing arts capital project for some time.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR THE ARTS

Capital Regional District

Following a cultural strategic planning initiative in 2002-03, the CRD established an arts funding program. The total now disbursed is more than \$2 million in operating grants, project grants and “IDEA” grants. No funds are allocated for capital purposes.

Eight of the CRD’s thirteen municipalities participate in the culture “function”. On the peninsula, Sidney participates. North and Central Saanich do not.

The CRD is currently reviewing its arts strategy. Information about the project is here.

<https://www.placespeak.com/en/topic/4694-crd-arts-strategy-building-our-artsfuture-together/#/overview>

Central Saanich

Central Saanich provides very little financial support for culture. It is a very junior partner (\$5,000 a total \$405,000 annually) in providing municipal support to the Mary Winspear Centre. We are told that the municipality will assist the Society’s project with planning issues, but that it will not have money to invest. Given that charity begins at home, a lack of leadership and financial participation from the project’s home municipal government will be an issue.

Municipal Support for Theatre Operations

Royal & McPherson Theatre Society

In the late 90s the CRD and City of Victoria set a funding model for the support of Royal Theatre and the McPherson Playhouse operations which is still in effect. \$450,000 is provided annually, \$100,000 from the CRD for the Royal and \$350,000 from Victoria for the McPherson. The CRD and the City each provide assistance with capital as well. For its part, RMTS subsidises local organizations with rent reductions worth about \$300,000 annually.

RMTS contends that the effect of freezing local government support is a 40% reduction in its value since 1998. RMTS is trying to persuade the CRD and Victoria that this should be addressed in the CRD’s current arts funding review and Victoria’s current Arts & Culture Master Plan.



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Mary Winspear Centre

The Mary Winspear Centre receives operating support from the three municipalities of the Peninsula - \$250,000 from Sidney, \$150,000 from North Saanich and \$5,000 from Central Saanich.

Only three theatres in the CRD receive direct municipal funding, and two of them are funded by their home municipalities independently of the CRD, the McPherson Playhouse by the City of Victoria and the Charlie White Theatre at the Winspear by Sidney, North Saanich and Central Saanich. The cost of operations of all other theatres in the region is covered by their owners – U Vic, the Conservatory, the small theatre companies and the School Districts.

The Society's community arts theatre model introduces an additional venue that could need the support of local government. The questions are, does local government have the capacity to provide it? Will local government have the will? It may be too easy for local government to say it already does enough, particularly if the West Shore project comes into play.

PROGRAMMING

What would be presented at Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's? The Society produced a long list:

- School District 63 (Saanich)
- Ballroom Dance societies
- Instrumental and Vocal Ensembles
- Service Clubs
- Government Organizations
- Visiting dignitaries
- Business leaders
- Seniors groups
- Dance academies
- Community forums
- Musical theatre productions
- Plays
- Music recitals
- Coffee concerts
- Festivals
- Exhibits
- Film presentations
- Church services/events
- Conventions
- Trade shows
- Public meetings
- Dinner theatre (This last is possible because Stelly's has a teaching kitchen.)

A review of this somewhat "catch-all" list suggests that most of the activity is expected to be booked by renting the theatre (or in some cases, just the lobby) to groups in the local community. Of the 22 activities listed, a few might be produced by the school (SD 63, musical



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theatre, plays, dinner theatre, recitals), a few more might be presentations of attractions on tour by facility management (instrumental and vocal ensembles, music recitals). Some might be co-presentations between the facility and groups in the community (community forums, musical theatre, plays, festivals). As we said, most of the activity will be rentals to community groups, groups which experience tells us are largely without significant resources and are correspondingly parsimonious. Low operating cost will be a critical factor for success and it will be difficult to book the 200 plus events a year needed to make sense of the theatre's operation from this list.

Suppose the theatre were to rely more on presenting touring attractions? First, it would enter into direct competition with the BC Touring Council members in the region, the Royal/Mac and the Charlie White (Winspear), both of which have the benefit of superior locations to that of Stelly's. Second, what's touring these days? Tribute acts, musicians, solo acts - not much theatre is on the road. How many more nights of music can the market absorb, given the programs of the Farquhar, the Goolden, the Royal and the Charlie White?

The McPherson's booking numbers have been in decline. If a mid-size theatre located in the heart of the city is struggling, how would a somewhat similar theatre expect to do surrounded by agricultural land in the least populous area of the region?

Finally, community theatres which operate in schools are presented with unique problems. School District 63 has a specific policies regarding naming rights in relation to fundraising (2210, 2440), as well as a no alcohol policy (2401). The impact of these policies must be fully understood. The interface between school and community activity must be carefully planned both philosophically and operationally. Who makes the final call on what is presented in the facility, the school or a community organization?

Governance, management and operations are intended to be considered in the second phase of the study. It is enough to say at this point that this can be one of the thorniest issues to consider when proposing a community theatre operation in a school.

OPTIONS

The initiative for this project came from the recognition that the MPR at Stelly's is inadequate to properly support the needs of the school's performing arts program. From this basic need, the concept of a community theatre at Stelly's grew into a much more ambitious project. We have been told that it is not the business case that will make sense of a new theatre at Stelly's, rather it is the need for the school to have a proper facility in which students can learn and find fulfilment in the study and practice of the performing arts.

We know that the performing arts programs at Stelly's in dance, drama, acting, musical theatre, concert band, jazz band, vocal jazz, choir, guitar and stagecraft attract more than 300 students annually. We know that the programs have to contend with one un-theatrical multi-purpose room and one band room. We know that classes in the MPR are often interrupted because of noise and traffic due to the close proximity to the kitchen. We know that the performing arts programs can be bumped from these facilities when they are used for other school and community events. We understand the frustration with the current inadequate facilities.



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We have not been asked to assess the feasibility of a teaching theatre to replace the MPR at Stelly's. We think though, that this is the time to reconsider first principles and look at some options. We consider four.

OPTION 1

Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's as proposed
Port Theatre (Nanaimo) is the model

- 800 seats on two levels
- Full stage, sprung floor, wings, fly tower, orchestra pit
- Proper backstage support (dressing rooms, green room, production maintenance space)
- Rehearsal hall
- Proper public spaces, exhibition space

People consulted within all stakeholder groups are concerned about a project of this scale. Many reasons drive this. Will the programming dominate school requirements? Can theatre management and theatre users fill so many seats? Can parking be accommodated? Will people come to a theatre in such a rural setting? People are fearful of the white elephant syndrome and are determined not to see one built.

Initial work to determine whether a theatre of this scale could fit on the available footprint indicates that the Band Room would likely have to be sacrificed. This would be an unacceptable outcome.

The 800 seat theatre is not recommended, irrespective of the outcome of the West Shore proposal.

OPTION 2

Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's as proposed
Richmond Gateway Theatre and the ACT Centre, Maple Ridge are the models

- 500 seats on two levels
- The rest as above

At this scale, the project generates some enthusiasm amongst teachers, School District 63 administrators and trustees, and some arts groups.

More guarded (understandably) are managers of the professional performing arts facilities. Competition will be an issue. Some decision makers at the municipal and regional level are also concerned about how such a facility would be integrated into the regional inventory.

While the project remains to be designed and costed, there is no doubt that even at 500 seats, it will require a major capital campaign to raise the eight figure number required. At present the Society is not built for that.

Stage rigging systems and orchestra pit lift systems are expensive and, for reasons of safety and liability, require trained professionals to operate them. The cost of staffing will be an issue.

Is the project feasible at 500 seats? Probably not; we do not recommend it.



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OPTION 3

Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's

The Frank Venables Theatre, South Okanagan Secondary School, Oliver is a good model. This is the community theatre option, in which a theatre built onto a school serves primarily as a facility for the benefit of the community as a whole. Such a facility should have

- 400 fixed seats on one raked level
- Traditional proscenium theatre with wings, sprung floor
- No balcony, no fly tower, no orchestra pit
- Backstage support (dressing rooms, limited production maintenance space)

This option will appeal to those who prefer the traditional fixed seat proscenium theatre space and finishes. The design priority for this theatre would be to serve first the expectations of the community.

A key factor for success would be an operating agreement between School District 63, local government (both municipal and regional) and the community. In Oliver, it is a non-profit society which programs and manages the theatre. It is reasonable to assume a similar governance/management arrangement for a community theatre attached to Stelly's SS in Central Saanich.

The fly tower and orchestra pit are not recommended for two reasons – they are expensive to include from the capital cost standpoint, and they require professional staff to operate. A balcony is not recommended because it adds cost and could make good acoustics more difficult to achieve.

(Curiously, the Frank Venables Theatre is able to serve alcohol, though it is on school property, perhaps because Oliver is the Wine Capital of Canada. Smoking, on the other hand, is not permitted on school grounds, so patrons must leave the property to indulge their habit.)

A Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's could be developed in accordance with these specifications in the next phase of the feasibility study.

OPTION 4

As we have said, the impetus for the project arose from the recognition that the existing MPR is inadequate as a teaching facility. What if we consider a new teaching theatre for Stelly's? What would that look like?

It will have to house the current performing arts program and allow room for some growth. Currently, more than 300 students take classes in dance, drama, acting, musical theatre, concert band, jazz band, vocal jazz, choir, guitar and stagecraft.

In addition to these classes, a new teaching facility will have to accommodate performances: two musical theatre productions, half a dozen Music Department concerts, the annual school play, a pair of dance recitals, some Coffee Concerts (4 to 5 per year) and Live at Lunch concerts.

Other school events include assemblies, Grad activities, Students' Council activities (including dances), Awards Ceremonies, Remembrance Day services, Global Gala, visiting guest artists, Ballroom Dance club.



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Finally, a small number of District and community events will need a home.

This activity program can be accommodated thus:

Performing Arts Learning & Practice Centre at Stelly's
(unabashedly, a teaching/education facility)

- Flexible theatre, 350 to 400+ moveable seats, sprung performance area
- "T" plan to provide wing space for end stage productions.
- Cable grid to support lighting and sound gear
(We leave a decision on a fly tower for this option until the next phase of this study.)
- Provision for motorized electrics, media arts technology
- Backstage support – dressing rooms, washrooms with showers, production maintenance
- Same-level storage
- Separate rehearsal/classroom
- Separate music/band room
- Comfortable public space capable of mounting fine arts exhibitions, event ticket booth

Similar facilities which will inform the development of the architectural program for this model are:

- Holy Trinity Catholic High School, Fort McMurray (built)
- Kitsilano Secondary School, Vancouver (in development)
- Orpheum Annex, Vancouver (built)
- Westbury Theatre, Edmonton Fringe Festival (built)

This program will distinguish the Performing Arts Learning & Practice Centre at Stelly's from all other school theatres in the region. Such a facility will increase enrolment in performing arts classes and could be the catalyst for the establishment of a Performing Arts Academy at Stelly's Secondary School. The facility will help to invigorate the school, just as the Boulders Climbing Gym has.

It is likely that Stelly's SS and the School District would play a leading role in the governance and management of this model.

The Performing Arts Learning & Practice Centre at Stelly's could be considered in the next phase of the feasibility study.

NEXT STEPS

We are not suggesting that both Options 3 and 4 be developed in the next phase of the feasibility study. It is unlikely there will be adequate budget to consider both. We are not keen to recommend one option at the expense of the other at this point. The Society and its partners should consider the Community Arts Theatre and Performing Arts Learning and Practice Centre models in relation to the original objectives for the project, and make a choice.

Therefore, we recommend that the Society convene the Steering Committee it has proposed comprised of representatives of the School District, the District of Central Saanich and the Society Board, and that the Steering Committee meet immediately to review the Society's goals and to determine in the light of this report whether the Community Arts Theatre or the



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Performing Arts Learning and Practice Centre best fits the needs of the school, the School District and the community.

We recommend that the Society monitor closely the progress of the West Shore Performing Arts Centre project.

We recommend that the Society's directors continue to "benchmark" other theatres attached to schools. A questionnaire format and a list of facilities is provided.

We recommend that the next phase of the feasibility study develop either the Community Arts Theatre or the Performing Arts Learning and Practice Centre as chosen by the Society's Steering committee, and that Phase 2 begin as soon as practical.



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CHAPTER 2 – BENCHMARKING THEATRES IN SCHOOLS

30 September, 2016

INTRODUCTION

The Society for a Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's (the Society) intends to create a community theatre attached to a school. Such facilities in such locations raise many issues. To understand them, and to understand the range of possibilities in terms of design, ownership, governance, management and programming, it was agreed that a number of theatres attached to schools in British Columbia should be "benchmarked", in the hope that the results will help to arrive at a sustainable model for Stelly's. We have reviewed and interviewed ten theatres in schools in southern British Columbia.

- Bell Performing Arts Centre, Surrey, Sullivan Heights SS, SD 36 (Surrey)
- Centre Stage Theatre, Summerland, Summerland SS, SD 67 (Okanagan Skaha)
- Clarke Theatre, Mission, Heritage Park SS, SD 75 (Mission)
- Frank Venables Theatre, Oliver, Southern Okanagan SS, SD 53 (Okanagan Similkameen)
- Kay Meek Centre, West Vancouver SS, SD 45 (West Vancouver)
- Massey Theatre, New Westminster SS, SD 40 (New Westminster)
- Max Cameron Theatre, Powell River, Brooks SS, SD 47 (Powell River)
- Michael J Fox Theatre, Burnaby South SS, SD 41 (Burnaby)
- Revelstoke Performing Arts Centre, Revelstoke SS, SD 19 (Revelstoke)
- Sagebrush Theatre, South Kamloops SS, SD 73 (Kamloops/Thompson)

There are others (including two theatres located in schools which declined to participate in the survey), but the foregoing is an adequate sample to cover most of the design and operational variations.

Information is organized under the following headings:

- Ownership, governance, management, program format (rent/present)
- Protocol for determining priority between school and community bookings
- Facilities (type, capacity, support, ancillary operations)
- Theatre events (school & community events, attendance)
- How the numbers work (budget, bottom line responsibility, major maintenance and capital)
- Staffing
- Factors for success

These theatres are all in different school districts. There is considerable variety in the way they are organized and managed. Appended to this report is a page or two about each of the theatres with information presented by the foregoing headings. What follows in the body of the report are general descriptions, analysis, and things to consider in the preparation of the architectural program as well as the next phase of the study. The report concludes with some things to consider in the next phase of the report.

First, it is helpful to understand the distinction between a theatre that operates on a rental basis only (often called a road house) and one that "presents" attractions in addition to renting its



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facilities. To mitigate risk, a theatre may rent its facilities for fixed amounts. Local groups who mount their own productions or book in artists that are touring, and representatives of touring shows are its clients and they rent the theatre and take the risk at the box office. A theatre that wants to diversify its performance program may invite a particular attraction to perform on the basis that the attraction and the theatre share in the revenues and expenses of the presentation; this is known as “presenting”. Presenting can be riskier to the theatre than strictly renting, but it allows a theatre to pursue its artistic objectives more aggressively.

OWNERSHIP, GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT, PROGRAM FORMAT

Bell Performing Arts Centre (Surrey, opened 2002)

Owned by SD 36 and operated by SD staff who are also theatre professionals dedicated to the purpose. They report to the SD Secretary Treasurer. A roadhouse, the theatre operates on a rental basis.

Centre Stage Theatre (Summerland, opened 1987)

Jointly owned by SD 67 and the District of Summerland. Governed under the terms of a joint use agreement by a Theatre Management Group comprised of 5 School District employees, 2 District of Summerland employees and 2 technicians. Day to day management is done by the school’s Principal and drama teacher, and the municipality’s Recreation Manager and Booking Clerk. The theatre is available only on a rental basis.

Clarke Theatre (Mission, opened 1996)

Owned by SD 75 and operated by SD staff who is also a theatre professional dedicated to the purpose. She reports to the SD’s Secretary/Treasurer. The theatre operates on a rental basis.

City of Mission has an interest in the theatre and sometimes provides financial support, but there is no formal agreement between the SD and the City.

Frank Venables Theatre (Oliver, opened 2014)

Owned by SD 53, leased to the Regional District of the Okanagan Similkameen. Governed by the non-profit Oliver Community Theatre Society under the terms of an agreement with the SD and the RDOS. Managed by a theatre professional employed by and reporting to the Society. The theatre is available for rent, occasionally presents attractions, and hopes to do more presenting in the future.

Kay Meek Centre (West Vancouver, opened 2005)

Owned by SD 45, operated under a long term joint use agreement with the West Vancouver Arts Centre Trust and managed by a theatre professional employed by and reporting to the Trust. The Centre rents its facilities and presents as well.

Massey Theatre (New Westminster, opened 1949)

Owned by SD 40, governed independently by the non-profit Massey Theatre Society and managed by a theatre professional employed by and reporting to the Society. The Massey both rents and presents attractions.



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Max Cameron Theatre (Powell River, opened about 2006)

Owned by SD 47, managed by a theatre professional who reports to the SD's Superintendent and Secretary Treasurer (regarding matters financial). The theatre both rents and presents.

Michael J Fox Theatre (Burnaby, opened 1993)

Owned by SD 61, governed by the non-profit Michael J Fox Theatre Society on a "handshake deal" made between the owner and the Society when the theatre was established. Managed by theatre professionals who report to the Society and a Business Services officer who reports to the SD's Secretary/Treasurer. A road house, the theatre is available only on a rental basis.

Revelstoke Performing Arts Centre (opened 2011)

Owned by SD 19 (built for under \$4 million), governed by the non-profit Revelstoke Arts Council under the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding, managed by a theatre professional employed by and reporting to the Arts Council. The Arts Council both rents and presents.

Sagebrush Theatre (Kamloops, opened 1978)

Owned by SD 73 which leases the facility to the City of Kamloops. The City contracts Western Canada Theatre Company, the principal user of the facility, to manage it. WTC designates an employee, its Client & Audience Services Manager to run the theatre. The Sagebrush is operated on a rental basis only.

Summary

Theatres in schools are generally owned outright by their school districts, some in partnership with local government. Most are managed by theatre professionals who work either directly for the SD or for a non-profit engaged by the owner to run the facility.

Theatres managed by school districts generally operate as rental houses. The Max Cameron is the exception; its relative isolation (two ferry rides away from the Lower Mainland) makes presenting a necessary method of filling the performance calendar. All but one of the theatres managed by third party non-profit societies both rent and present. The exception is the Sagebrush which rents only, in part to ensure that all groups in the community have fair access to the facility, given that it is managed by its principal resident company, Western Canada Theatre.

PROTOCOL FOR PRIORITY BOOKING BETWEEN SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY USE

Bell Performing Arts Centre

The Bell's mission is to provide a performance and gathering space for SD 36 and the community at large.

Bookings are made on a first come, first served basis. Management has tried to give school and SD bookings a bit of a head start by allowing bookings five years in advance.

No individual groups get preferential treatment.



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Centre Stage Theatre

The theatre was built to serve the school and the community.

Usage is covered by an agreement made in 1987 between the School District and the District of Summerland. "School use" is defined as during school hours on school days plus 35 selected evenings during the school year, rent free. "Community use" is defined as all other times at rents defined by the Theatre Management Group. The Theatre Management group coordinates the operation of the facility.

Clarke Theatre

The Clarke is a regional community theatre for civic and touring events built with support from the community

There is no priority booking. All bookings are first come, first served. No special days or times of day are reserved for school use. Everyone pays to use the theatre (though the school pays less).

Frank Venables Theatre

A fire destroyed the original theatre in the Southern Okanagan Secondary School. When the school was rebuilt, the theatre was too, (though at about 200 seats less capacity) by virtue of a pre-existing agreement between the SD and the Regional District. The Oliver Community Theatre Society has an agreement with the SD and the RDOS to manage the theatre. The Society's goals are to

- Advance local, nation and international presentations in the South Okanagan
- Develop local amateur and professional performing arts
- Encourage local audiences, artists, students to engage in the performing arts

An addendum to the agreement (which can be updated annually) describes the protocol for school and community use

- SD gets 30 bookings per year gratis and can make the bookings 14 months in advance (two months earlier than anyone else)
- Beyond that, bookings are first come, first served; the SD pays the youth rate for additional bookings
- There are no grandfathered events

Kay Meek Centre

The Centre's mission suggests a community theatre more than it does a school facility, to wit

- To engage and inspire our community through artistic excellence and learning experiences that enrich our lives and create a passion for the performing arts.
- To act as an inclusive, energetic catalyst for vibrant and diverse performing arts experiences.
- To collaborate as a productive and committed partner of the arts.
- To lead in the celebration of cultural achievements in our community.



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The Trust has a long term facility use agreement with the SD which sets out a set number of days (about 80) when the SD can use the theatre. These days are tied to the school calendar, and the school schedules many activities about two years in advance. The theatres host the Drama/Theatre production programs of three high schools, and each school tends to alternate their use between the Grosvenor and the Studio. These productions by the high school groups run for approximately 2-3 week blocks per school year. The theatre is also used for Christmas and end of year events.

The Trust also has an agreement with the District of West Vancouver which requires the theatre to serve the community in ways defined in the agreement. The quid pro quo is an annual grant in the \$150,000 range.

Community groups and presentations are usually booked less than two years in advance. Last minute requests by the SD are handled on an as available basis.

Neither the Grosvenor nor the Studio are teaching facilities, the school has separate drama and dance studios. Occasionally the school will request the Grosvenor for voice work.

Massey Theatre

Neither a civic nor a school facility, the Massey is a professional arts organization which works to support the performing arts throughout Metro Vancouver

“Catalyst for a vibrant, expressive community, a stage where any dream is possible since 1949.”

Resident companies are: Royal City Musical Theatre, Royal City Youth Ballet, New Westminster Symphony Orchestra, Maple Leaf Singers, Mushtari Begum Festival, SD 40 Fine Arts

School District and resident companies book their regular dates, theatre management rents and presents to fill the gaps. It hasn't been necessary to establish a formal protocol for priority.

Max Cameron Theatre

In May school department heads (drama, music, choral) are asked for their preferred dates for the coming school year ahead of community bookings or presentations. Theatre & Facilities Manager meets with school personnel to fine tune dates.

The school has daily use of flex blocks with two weeks advance booking

Superintendent can book at anytime on a space available basis

All bookings must be made through the Theatre & Facilities Manager

Manager has been trying to get the SD to consider a written policy for the operation of the theatre. Until one is prepared and agreed to, this statement seems to cover the situation: “Serve the community as well as the school; the manager brings in bookings”.

Michael J Fox Theatre

Unwritten agreement between SD 41 and the Michael J Fox Theatre Society

School gets about 15% of time in theatre and priority scheduling for school calendar events (Remembrance Day, Christmas events, end of school year concerts and events). Once the



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school events are booked, they are locked in and the Society can book the remaining dates with rentals to community groups

Revelstoke Performing Arts Centre

The Revelstoke Arts Council provides community leadership in the development, promotion, stimulation and support of arts and cultural heritage for present and future generations

The Theatre showcases excellence in the performing arts to inspire, educate and foster passion for the arts throughout the community and beyond.

Regular users include Revelstoke Theatre Company, Flying Arrow Productions, SD 19

The protocol for determining priority between school and community use is not clearly spelled out. Drama department tends to want more time than needed for its activities. Local Theatre companies usually need a week per show for tech rehearsals and run. Dates are constantly being discussed. A clear operating agreement would be helpful.

Sagebrush Theatre

Western Canada Theatre Company will provide the Kamloops Regional Community with challenging, professional live theatre. The company will entertain, educate, enrich, and interact with the cultural mosaic of its community.

Resident companies: Western Canada Theatre, Kamloops Symphony, SD 73

SD 73 gets 100 block bookings per year (8am to 3pm or 3pm to 11pm). Base rent is complimentary, additional services are paid for. South Kamloops Secondary used to get all of the dates, but now the 100 are allocated to schools throughout the school district. Still, SKSS is the most frequent user. The drama program has three “assemblies” per year, each preceded by 4 days of rehearsals = 15 dates. Another regular use is Young Peoples’ Concert (4 times per year, 5 days each = 20 dates) attended by 7,000.

Summary

The large theatres (Bell, Clarke, Massey) operate on a first come, first served basis. The larger the theatre, the less likely school staff will regard it as a teaching facility, so school/community conflicts are rare. The Massey does provide priority booking for its resident companies which is not difficult to accommodate as the rhythm of their seasons is predictable year to year.

Theatres managed by third parties where booking protocol is covered in their operating agreements seem to handle bookings with less back and forth between theatre management and school staff than those without an agreement. Theatre managers without an operating agreement (Max Cameron, Revelstoke) would prefer to have one and are working to achieve that.

In cases where the theatre is run directly by SD staff, the theatre is available for community use after school requirements have been met.



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FACILITIES

This little table summarizes information shown in detail in the appendices. (x = yes)

Theatre	Seats	balcony	flies	Pit	box office	avg rent
Bell	1,052	X	x	X	must	\$2.00
Centre Stage	295			X	no	\$1.00
Clarke	702	X	x	X	no	\$2.00
F Venables	380				x	\$2.00
Kay Meek	488			X	x	\$3.00
Massey	1,260	X	x	X	must	\$1.50
M Cameron	402	X			no	\$1.50
MJ Fox	613		x	X	x	\$2.50
Revelstoke	275			Unused	x	\$1.50
Sagebrush	706	X	x	X	no	\$1.00

Some conclusions are easy to draw.

Balcony

It is generally the large theatres that have balconies (Bell, Clarke, Massey, Sagebrush). The Max Cameron is the anomaly. Smaller theatres don't have balconies because (1) the intimacy of the actor/audience relationship is more easily achieved in theatres under 400 seats, (2) capital costs increase with the installation of a balcony and (3) acoustical design is trickier if a balcony has to be accommodated. For these reasons, a balcony for a Stelly's theatre up to 400 seats is not recommended.

Flying

It is the larger theatres that have flying systems. They are expensive to build and equip, and they require professional technicians to operate them, increasing operating costs. A stage tower with flying rig is not recommended for Stelly's.

Pit

A purpose built, separate orchestra pit would require a good deal of planning. It will have to be designed to meet fire safety standards for entrance and egress. It will also have to accommodate musicians with mobility impairments. It will require a surprising amount of space and a good deal of capital expense. For these reasons, most smaller theatres in schools forego the purpose built pit.

Most of the theatres have made an allowance for a pit, usually by removing a portion of the forestage and fencing in the pit area. This is usually a labour intensive conversion which is why pits are not much used. Revelstoke has never used its pit in its 5 seasons of operation.



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Modern musicals often place musicians on-stage or just off rather than in front of the stage in small theatres. Even in large theatres where a pit is available, contemporary shows place the band on or even off stage for artistic reasons.

Larger theatres which can generate the revenue required to support large-cast shows accompanied by orchestra can have a pit which operates by some form of mechanical means, reducing operating labour costs. Such systems are expensive and would be a very costly element for Stelly's.

If an accompanying musicians playing area is to be included in the program for Stelly's, it can be achieved by leaving sufficient space between the front of the stage and the first row of seats to accommodate musicians on the auditorium floor, and separating them from the audience by a short portable wall. The trade-off would be intimacy with the audience when the musicians' area is not used.

If music is to be a prime programming objective for a theatre at Stelly's, then consideration should be given to a concert hall configuration. This may serve the school well, provided the new design accommodates a rehearsal/studio facility for the drama program and maintains (or even improves) the existing Band Room. A concert hall would carve out a distinctive market niche for the community aspect of the theatre's activities. This concept is dealt with again in the conclusion to this report.

Entrance

The Bell, the Clarke and the Revelstoke PAC all have entrances and lobby spaces that are shared with the school. In the case of Revelstoke, a very large gym is across the hall from the theatre, which makes for considerable congestion when a basketball tournament coincides with a show in the theatre. The theatre lobby experience cannot really be duplicated in a school lobby or hallway. A separate entrance and lobby is recommended for both aesthetic and operational reasons.

- Bell's front entrance is the same as the school's
- Centre Stage has its own entrance and lobby
- Clarke's entrance and lobby is shared with the school
- Frank Venables has its own lobby and entrance. Situated on the west side of the valley, the school presents the theatre lobby as its face to the town.
- Kay Meek has a distinctive entrance and lobby
- Massey Theatre has its own entrance and is separated from the majority of the school
- Max Cameron Theatre has its own entrance and lobby
- MJFT lobby entrance is separate from school entrance
- Revelstoke PAC shares its entrance and lobby with the school. In fact, a very large gym is across the hall from the entrance to the theatre.
- Sagebrush lobby entrance is separate from school entrance

Box office

Several theatres do not operate their own box office because an independent ticket seller is established in their community (Centre Stage, Clarke, Max Cameron, Sagebrush). Others do on an optional basis. The Revelstoke PAC sells tickets on line, at two retail locations in the town



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and at the Centre prior to the performance. The Bell and the Massey require their clients to use their box office service. The Kay Meek Centre is reviewing its box office operation.

Average rent per seat

The number shown for average rent is calculated per seat. Theatre rents vary by day of week, time of day, and who the customer is. Schools sometimes pay nothing, sometimes a reduced rate for bookings above a minimum number of free ones. Community groups and non-profits almost always pay less than commercial undertakings. The per seat calculation is helpful in budgeting revenue.

Production support

Not included in the chart is a comparison of production support facilities – dressing rooms, green room, wardrobe maintenance and the like. They vary considerably depending on the age and intended use of the theatres reviewed.

A Green Room's effectiveness as a place for performers to relax doesn't work well when it has to be a drama classroom as well.

Theatre managers are happy when they can offer good backstage facilities for their artists and good technical equipment for the shows. The one item that is too often missing is showers attached to the dressing rooms. This may be because schools with theatres also have gyms, which always have showers, so student needs can be met. However, if the theatre is a community resource as well, showers are part of the service that touring artists appreciate. Indeed, in theatres played by Equity companies, they are a requirement, and have been for years.

THEATRE EVENTS

Bell Performing Arts Centre

The Bell averages about 250 events per year, all rentals, a high level of utilization. Attendance is not tracked as these numbers are not relevant to the large number of school and church events.

Centre Stage Theatre

In 2015 there were 71 days of school events and 15 days of community events, all rentals. (Community numbers look like they may be up in 2016.) The local theatre company takes a week of dates every year and the school drama department stages an annual musical.

Clarke Theatre

The Clarke does about 230 events per year and is strictly a rental road house; 30 are school bookings, the rest are all renters – Festival competitions, dance studios, promoters, community groups, independent schools, home schoolers are leading clients.

Frank Venables Theatre

Last season (2015-16) at the Frank Venables there were 50 ticketed events, 151 days of use (rehearsals, tours, public and private events), 214 volunteer services and attendance of about



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12,000. The Society currently presents on a fairly limited basis, and hopes to grow this aspect of its programming.

Kay Meek Centre

Approximately 50,000 tickets are printed annually for events in the theatres. The Centre presents attractions as well as rents the theatres.

Massey Theatre

Events at the Massey have varied between 180 and 220 (the low end caused by the uncertainty of the theatre's future), both rentals and presentations by the Society. About 50 are school fine arts events (1000 of the school's 2000 students participate in fine arts programs). The Society's extracurricular youth arts program, in collaboration with the SD, is one of the theatre's most significant strengths in term of building community relationships. Annual attendance ranges between 85,000 and 125,000; 100,000 is a good average.

Max Cameron Theatre

School events at the Max Cameron include concerts, dramas and school related lecture style presentations. Community events include wellness presentations, film festivals, fundraisers, funerals, etc. The theatre presents Live from the Met in HD and the National Theatre Live telecasts, as well as half a dozen live shows programmed and facilitated by the Theatre Manager

Michael J Fox Theatre

The Michael J Fox hosts about 350 events per year of which 15% are school activities and the remainder are community based. The theatre is a road house – it does not present at all.

Revelstoke Performing Arts Centre

About 80 events took place at the Revelstoke PAC last season, mostly rentals, with a few presentations by the Arts Council. The theatre drew a little over 7,000 people, roughly the population of the town.

Sagebrush Theatre

The Sagebrush hosted 190 public events and 80-90 rehearsal days last season. Of these, 100 were school events, 89 were community events. Annual attendance varies between 85,000 and to 100,000.

The Sagebrush only rents, but WCT, as the Manager, produces five main-stage shows a year. It is a complex relationship as WCT is treated as a multi-user client, but also manages the space. The theatre manager is very careful to remain neutral so that the community does not get the impression that WCT is favoured over other community users.

Summary

Annual attendance which matches the population of the theatre's service area indicates a good deal of community engagement. The Frank Venables, the Kay Meek, the Massey, Revelstoke and the Sagebrush all meet this standard.



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BUDGET/BOTTOM LINE RESPONSIBILITY/MAJOR MAINTENANCE & CAPITAL

Bell Performing Arts Centre

The Secretary Treasurer of the District is the financial administrator of the theatre.

Earned revenue last year was \$608,000. All revenue is earned through rent, box office surcharges, concession and labour mark up. The theatre doesn't charge for most of the school district activity so in lieu, a loss on operations is accepted. (The District considers the theatre to operate at break if it were to be paid full rate for the District use of the space.) There are no grants or subsidies as school districts are generally not eligible.

Expenses were \$710,000 and the SD 36 covered the shortfall.

Centre Stage Theatre

The 1987 agreement between the District municipality and the School District defines which body is responsible for what aspect of the theatre's operation. Revenue generated by school events accrues to the School District, revenue from community events goes to the municipality. Expenses are paid by each body according to the agreement and each keeps its own financial records, absorbing any loss attributable to its defined part of the operation. Both parties meet annually to agree on major maintenance and capital items, and each manages its own capital budget. Grant opportunities are applied for when available and a project is eligible.

Clarke Theatre

The School District develops and manages the budget. Generally, the SD is ineligible to apply for grants (Gaming, BC Touring Council, federal grants, etc.) The SD has to absorb any operating loss. This explains the theatre's risk averse "rent only" strategy. Custodial costs can be high. (In some theatres, a renter can pay more for custodial costs that they do in rent.) SD has full responsibility for capital and major maintenance. Sometimes the City will assist with a grant to cover equipment replacement or some other one-time expense requirement.

Frank Venables Theatre

Earned revenue is about 30% of the total. The balance of the theatre's income is provided by the Town and Area C through RDOS.

The Society manages the budget; ultimately the SD and the RDOS have to ensure the financial sustainability of the theatre

A small fund for theatre seats held by the School District was not completely spent (the seats were donated) so the remainder is available to be spent on small ongoing capital items.

Kay Meek Centre

The annual budget varies between \$1.3 and \$2 million, depending on the revenue generated by presentations, the number of which vary from season to season. Most revenue is earned, though an annual grant of about \$150,000 from the District of West Vancouver is provided as part of a service agreement. Private sector support is actively sought and is growing.



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Some of the Centre's operating expenses are absorbed by the School District, as the Centre is attached to the school (utilities, etc).

The Trust is responsible for the operating bottom line and for major maintenance and capital items.

Massey Theatre

The order of magnitude of the Massey Theatre annual budget is \$900,000 of which 80-85% is earned. The City of New Westminster provides \$59,000 to allow the Massey to subsidize rent of non-profit renters located in New Westminster. Some revenue is derived from Gaming funds and from private sector support

School District provides the theatre for \$1 per year and the Society pays the SD per use for utilities, custodians and custodial supplies.

The Society is responsible for the theatre's financial bottom line.

The School District has been wrestling with the future of New Westminster Secondary School for years, and by extension, the future of the Massey Theatre. The City has been involved as far as the theatre is concerned, for the Massey is the largest venue in the town. In April 2016, the School District decided that the Massey will be renovated, not demolished. It remains to be seen what arrangement the City and the School District will make to accomplish this.

Max Cameron Theatre

All financial matters are handled by the School District Treasurer and accounting department, which allocates the budget. SD Treasurer allocates funds to major maintenance and capital as able.

Michael J Fox Theatre

The annual budget is set by the Society and accounting support is provided by the School District. The Society has ensured there is no shortfall as the operating model has been extremely minimalist. The District pays none of the operating expenses.

Capital and major improvements are a shared arrangement - the Society raises funds through the annual Golf Tournament and the District contributes when it can.

Revelstoke Performing Arts Centre

Revelstoke is a resort municipality and can make grants for tourism marketing and tourism infrastructure. The Revelstoke PAC falls into the second category. RAC hopes to become a line item in the municipality's budget. As a non-profit society, the Arts Council is eligible for support from other governments - Columbia Basin Trust, BC Touring Council, Gaming etc., to cover staff and other costs. The Revelstoke PAC has been growing local corporate support.

The School District charges the PAC \$1,000 per month for utilities (\$11,000 per year because August if dark). The RPAC needs to earn the revenue from 5 non-profit rentals per month (@ \$200 per) to cover the SD utility charge.

Revelstoke Arts Council is responsible for the PAC's bottom line.



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For major maintenance and capital, School District looks after the items it paid for in the theatre, Arts Council raises funds for the items it paid for or has identified as a new need.

Sagebrush Theatre

Sagebrush earns \$200,000, receives \$223,000 from the City of Kamloops, and \$53,000 from the SD to put towards janitorial and utilities.

The Western Canada Theatre is responsible for the Sagebrush's operating bottom line.

A \$.50 per ticket charge goes to a major maintenance and capital fund; the theatre also receives funds annually from SD73 and the City specifically for capital projects

Summary

Theatres run directly by school districts are generally ineligible for grants from senior levels of government. The non-profit structure provides more opportunities to diversify revenue through grants.

Those that are managed and programmed by non-profit societies in accordance with an agreement with a school district are able to apply for grants. These theatres are therefore able to offer a broader range of programming for the general community because they can present attractions themselves, as well as merely rent the theatre.

Annual operating subsidies often exceed \$100,000.

STAFFING

Bell Performing Arts Centre

Manager, and Associate Manager are both theatre professionals employed by the SD. The Manager reports to the Secretary Treasurer of the District.

Technical administrator, a theatre professional employed by the SD, reports to the Manager and supervises Universal Show Systems which is contracted to provide technical services.

Box Office Manager is a CUPE employee of the SD, FOH Manager supervises volunteer staff

Centre Stage Theatre

The drama teacher and the Principal of the school work with the municipality's Booking clerk and the Recreation Manager on the day to day dealings of the theatre. Higher level items are managed by the Recreation Manager and Facilities Manager. (Each organization takes financial and administrative responsibility)

Technical staff is contracted by the District of Summerland for all community events

FOH is volunteer

Clarke Theatre

Theatre professional employed by the SD manages the theatre, reports to the SD Secretary/Treasurer. Supported by a booking clerk employed by the City who uses the municipality's system to manage bookings, and by a share of a clerk employed by the school



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Technical services are provided by call-out non-union casuals. (Hard to attract technicians so far up the valley)

FOH is volunteer

Frank Venables Theatre

Theatre professional employed by the Society manages the theatre.

2 professional technicians are contracted on a call-out basis

FOH is volunteer, Box office is supervised by a part time coordinator

Kay Meek Centre

Theatre professional employed by the Trust acts as the Executive Director. He is supported by a Director of Marketing, Communications & Development, a Membership/Development Assistant, an Accountant, and an Administrative assistant

Technical Director hires and manages technicians as required

Client Services/Operations Manager runs FOH; Box Office Supervisor

Massey Theatre

Staff manages both the Massey Theatre and since 2014, the city owned 361 seat Anvil Centre Theatre located in downtown New Westminster

Management group is led by a theatre professional employed by the Society, the Executive Director. She is supported by an Administrator, a Programming Assistant and Contract marketing and fundraising help

Technical Director has an assistant, and manages on call technicians

Patron Services Manager and on call patron services staff look after the FOH; Ticket Manager, Ticket Assistant run the box office as a separate business unit

Max Cameron Theatre

Theatre & Facilities Manager reports to Trustees through Superintendent and Sec/Treasurer; relates to School Principal but doesn't report

Technical Director

1 FOH Manager casual for events only + 2-4 volunteers lobby

Michael J Fox Theatre

The Michael J Fox Theatre has employed a hybrid governance and management structure from the beginning. It has worked because, until now, the same players have been in their roles. Two of the leaders are now retiring.

Director of Operations Jim Dobbs reports to the Society. Business Services Coordinator Monica Vriend (CUPE), reports to SD41 Sec/Treasurer.



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Director Of Technical Operations David McRae, reports to Society, he supervises a Theatre Technician supplemented by on call workers

Guest Services Assistant, reports to Society and supervises a casual FOH Mgr and usher staff

Revelstoke Performing Arts Centre

Arts Council employs a professional Theatre Manager who is sometimes assisted by the Arts Council's Executive Director.

Lighting and Sound technicians are contracted on call

FOH Manager contracted on call, usher staff are volunteers. Box office is on line, with ticket pickup at the Centre prior to the performance.

All staff are trained in hospitality and school protocols

Sagebrush Theatre

Western Canada Theatre's Client & Audience Services Manager serves as the manager of the theatre.

The company has a full-time year-round Technical Director and a full-time 10-month Assistant TD. Casual technicians are engaged as required.

FOH is handled by Supervisors (paid casual employees) and volunteer ushers (200 approx.) A Volunteer Coordinator (paid a flat rate per event requiring volunteers) looks after recruiting and assignments.

Tickets are sold through Kamloops Live box office service. <https://tickets.kamloopslive.com>

Summary

Every theatre needs a manager, a technical person to look after the stage and technical equipment, custodial services to keep the place clean, a way to sell tickets and people to look after the audience when it arrives.

Of the theatres reviewed, only one (Centre Stage in Summerland) relies on the part time efforts of SD and municipal employees to fill the management function. It works because of the clarity of the founding joint use agreement and the good nature of the people who have been involved. All the rest, whether governance comes from a SD or a non-profit, are managed by theatre professionals on a full time basis.

All the theatres rely on professional stage technicians, whether on a full-time, contract or casual basis.

WorkSafe BC is beginning to take a closer look at theatres from a workplace safety viewpoint, which could result in operating cost implications in the future.



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FACTORS FOR SUCCESS

Bell Performing Arts Centre

The Bell PAC is a large theatre to serve a major metropolitan community and one of the largest school districts in the country. The School District is committed that the centre should serve the community.

Centre Stage Theatre

Good working communication between the two organizations (SD67 & The District of Summerland), reasonable expectations with regards to facility use, a continued interest in always improving the facility and its operations.

Well outlined guidelines for use, fees & expectations

A generous operating budget

An active arts community and an enthusiastic group willing to spearhead funding, community projects, grant applications

Clarke Theatre

The Clarke is supported in the community – people gave money to get it built. This support continues to translate into attendance.

The large capacity broadens the range of promoters and acts that can make financial sense of an appearance.

Frank Venables Theatre

The community voted 75% “Yes” in the referendum held to authorize a mil rate increase to support the theatre’s operations.

The community supports the theatre by using it and by attending events

The theatre is now the major performing arts venue in the South Okanagan

Kay Meek Centre

A group of arts-minded community members who worked to bring the project to reality over a twenty-year period.

A supportive school district that saw the opportunity to build a performing arts centre to replace an old high school auditorium.

An “Angel”. Kay Meek supported the project with gifts totaling \$8 million. She died on the day of the first performance in November 2004 at the age of 98.

The Centre is the only performing arts centre in West Vancouver.

The Centre’s role in both the school and the community is clearly defined.



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Massey Theatre

The Massey has been serving New Westminster and Metro Vancouver since 1949.

At 1260 seats, the Massey has the capacity to support community based producers of large scale productions (musicals and dance in particular).

The Massey has the staff expertise and the theatrical equipment to serve its clients well

Max Cameron Theatre

The Max Cameron is a modern, well-equipped theatre and the only professionally managed theatre in town.

Michael J Fox Theatre

The Michael J Fox Theatre is centrally located in Metro Vancouver.

The Burnaby School District has made a commitment that the theatre should serve the community.

A favourite son of Burnaby has lent his name to the theatre.

The theatre is suitable and has the capacity for dance recitals

Revelstoke Performing Arts Centre

New theatre is being well branded and attracting the equivalent of the town's population annually. Artists like to play here because they are well looked after.

Sagebrush Theatre

The Sagebrush is located in a very active and supportive community. It is the only professional venue in town of its size and is able to host events from an annual dance recital up to Gordon Lightfoot or Jann Arden. Western Canada Theatre did "Mary Poppins" last season, and in a town of 85,000, attendance was almost 11,000. The theatre's rental rates are the lowest in the province; low ticket fees and a low charge-out rate (non-union technicians) make the venue attractive to commercial acts touring the Interior.

Summary of key factors for success

Theatres in schools need

- the support of the school and the SD
- support from local and regional government if the theatre is to be a resource for the community as a whole. Typically, this amount of this annual support exceeds six figures.
- a clear operating agreement that spells out
 - protocol for priority of use between school and community
 - financial responsibilities
 - management structure



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- a cooperative relationship between the Manager of the theatre and the Principal and Drama Teacher in the school is crucial. Notwithstanding an agreement between the School District, local government and the operating society, the School District does not always speak for the school.
- up to date, well designed, well maintained facilities
- professional management and technical staff
- solid community support through volunteer participation and attendance
- low operating cost

CONSIDERATIONS FOR DEVELOPING THE ARCHITECTURAL PROGRAM

How does all this information help The Society and its consultants to establish the architectural program for a theatre attached to Stelly's?

Auditorium

The Society wants a theatre to serve the community and not just the school, to the following specs: proscenium theatre of about 400 seats with a sprung stage, wing space, technical grid with catwalks and an area for musicians to accompany the action on stage.

Balconies are an expensive and unnecessary luxury in theatres below 400 seats capacity, and one is not recommended for Stelly's.

Orchestra pits, though often provided for on a manual labour changeover basis, are often not used. Powered solutions are prohibitively expensive, especially in a small capacity theatre. It is not recommended for Stelly's. An area between the front of the stage and the first row of seating may be established for musicians, and "walled" off when used.

The Front of House (FOH)/lobby area

- Public entrance and lobby area that is separate from the school's and which can operate independently of the school schedule and activities.
- capacity to sell tickets prior to a performance
In the age of the internet, a full service box office is not a necessity. Patrons can buy tickets on-line or at central retail locations. All that is needed at the theatre is space for a computer and a printer, and a place for patrons to buy what tickets remain at the door at the time of performance.
- an area for attractions to sell their "swag"
- a refreshment bar (with storage)
- men's and women's washrooms to handle the capacity of the room
- first aid room
- janitor's room

The auditorium should be separated from the FOH by sound and light locks.



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Back of House areas

- FOH/backstage crossover. (Theatre staff must be able to go from the FOH to the backstage area without having to go through the auditorium or outdoors.)
- Upstage crossover. (Permits performers to move from one side of the stage to the other unseen by the audience, also provides loading access for theatrical effects and technical equipment to the backstage, unseen by the audience.)
- Dedicated dressing rooms with lights, mirrors, washrooms, showers, costume racks. Dedicated Greenroom. Laundry, wardrobe.
- Backstage storage (piano, risers, technical equipment, show elements) at stage level
- Load in area and loading bay at stage level
- Production office for technical personnel.
- Office for the theatre management and admin functions.
- House mix position
- Control booth
- Dimmer room
- Mechanical room
- Electrical room
- Telephone/communications room
- Garbage/recycling area
- Hazardous waste area

What about a rehearsal studio? The Society has said it wants a rehearsal studio of the same dimensions as the stage. In a stand-alone theatre, this would be desirable. In this particular school situation, where the current Multi-Purpose Room (MPR) is clearly inadequate to the needs of the school's performing arts programs, the rehearsal studio is an absolute necessity, with the understanding that it will serve the school's programs more than it will the community. It should be designed not just as a rehearsal hall, but as a flexible flat floor performance space, with consideration given to public access, performers support and proper technical capability.

Finally, whatever configuration the design of the theatre follows, it must not compromise the existing Band Room, which is fundamental to the school's performing arts program.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE NEXT PHASE OF THE STUDY

Governance/management and Policy

Much of the information obtained in the benchmarking exercise will be useful in the next stage of the feasibility study in which the operating model, issues of governance and management and capital campaign readiness are considered. Meanwhile, the benchmarking exercise raises and clarifies a number of important matters.

Theatres in schools work when they are supported by both the school and the school district. Strong support from local and regional government is also an important factor for success when the theatre is intended to serve the community.



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Clear policies and agreements are needed to establish operating and financing policies as well as booking protocols to determine priorities between school and community use. In the absence of an agreement, theatre operations often have to rely on personal relationships between the theatre manager and the school's Principal and drama teacher. If these relationships don't work, the theatre will have problems. In the absence of an agreement, a drama department's default position can be that the theatre is a classroom. In a community theatre situation, the theatre can only be a classroom within carefully defined limits.

Technical Theatre Consultant

In general, when a new theatre is to be built within or attached to a school, it is important that the design team include a professional technical theatre consultant, preferably one who has experienced the difficulties in working through the design problems inherent in theatres attached to schools.

BC Touring Council

The BC Touring Council <http://bctouring.org/> (BCTC) is an association of artists, touring arts organizations, venues and presenters. The organization holds an annual Pacific Contact at which members meet to book attractions, to attend showcases and workshops and to network.

BCTC also manages two grant programs for the BC Arts Council; the Community Presenters Assistance Program and Community Presenter Youth Engagement Program.

We recommend that the Society join BC Touring Council.

A subset of BCTC members comprises managers of venues located in schools.

We recommend that this benchmarking report be shared with BC Touring Council and its theatres in schools sub-group as a way of introducing the Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's project to its potential peers.

Is a traditional proscenium stage auditorium the best design for the future for a community theatre in a small community?

One manager interviewed wished that a flat floor flexible space had been built instead of a traditional proscenium auditorium because it would have fulfilled more needs in the community and thus have enjoyed more diversified use. In addition, to performances, a flat floor venue could have served the markets for meeting and catered events.

Looking forward, another manager opined that development of digital and media arts suggests that the days the traditional fixed seat proscenium theatres are numbered. Flexible spaces capable of multi-media presentations will be the forms that satisfy the coming generations who will want to consume the performing arts differently.

Here again market context for a theatre at Stelly's ought to be considered. The performance spaces in the "neighbourhood" (the Charlie White at the Winspear Centre, the Ridge at Claremont SS and the Dave Dunnet Community Theatre at Oak Bay HS) are all fixed seat proscenium theatres. Is another needed?

There has been some conversation around the possibility of joint management with the Winspear Centre. We have had no subsequent discussions with Winspear's management on the



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topic, however we imagine that Winspear's management would be more receptive to programming and booking a facility that was complimentary to the Charlie White rather than one very similar to it. A flat floor flexible venue would provide a wider range of programming and booking opportunities.

Music

The Society has determined that a theatre at Stelly's should include an orchestra pit. If music is to be such an important part of its program, perhaps the concept of a Chamber Concert Hall should be on the table. Consider a scaled down (and much less ornate) version of the Musikverein in Vienna (from whence comes the Vienna Philharmonic's annual New Year's concert). <https://www.musikverein.at/> An acoustic hall of up to 400 seats on a flat floor with a platform at one end, capable of also being used as a "black box" theatre as well as for meetings and events could be interesting.

The Steering Committee

In the first phase of this study, we recommended that the Society

- Convene the steering committee it proposed, comprised of representatives of the Society, the School District and the District municipality to determine which of two options should be pursued
- (A) community arts theatre along the lines of the Frank Venables Theatre in Oliver or
- (B) Performing Arts Learning and Practice Centre, primarily to serve Stelly's pedagogical programs

The Society leaned towards the first option and we agreed to benchmark a number of theatres attached to schools in BC with the hope that the resulting information would eliminate any doubt about how to proceed.

The benchmarking exercise has not provided the anticipated clarity because Stelly's market situation is unique.

- The theatres of less than 400 capacity (Centre Stage in Summerland, Frank Venables in Oliver, Max Cameron in Powell River and the Revelstoke PAC) all serve small communities at some distance from large metropolitan areas. They are "the only game in town", and would not exist independent of the schools they are in. So for some communities, a theatre attached to a school can be the only viable option. These theatres have little or no local competition. This would not be the case with a theatre at Stelly's which would have competition with the Mary Winspear 11 kilometers up the road as well as with the theatres twenty-five minutes away in "downtown" Victoria.

Benchmarking has not helped with funding issues either.

- For communities without a theatre and no prospects for one, attaching a theatre to a school may make sense provided a new school is being built. It appears that the only time the Ministry of Education will consider funding a new theatre is as a part of a new school. The Arts Council in Revelstoke worked for twenty years to achieve an arts centre – it wasn't until the Ministry of Education determined to build a new secondary



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school in the town that the theatre became possible. Stelly's is forty years old. Replacing or rebuilding it is not on an agenda.

- Theatres attached to schools need the support of their local governments as well as the school district, if not for initial capital, then for ongoing operations. At present, the District of Central Saanich appears standoffish regarding the project, and has said informally that it has no money for it. In addition, the District does not participate in the CRD's Arts Development Service.
- In West Vancouver, it took an "Angel" - Kay Meek - to provide the wherewithal to move the project forward and attract the School District's and the community's eventual support. Is there such a potential patron in Central Saanich?

We continue in the view that for the Society to move ahead with this feasibility analysis for a community arts theatre at Stelly's, it must convene and consult with the Steering Committee it has proposed. Support of the School District and the District Municipality needs to be firmer than what has been expressed to date, and for the Society to obtain that support, it must ensure that the School District and Central Saanich are fully informed.



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CHAPTER 3 – OUTLINE FOR OPERATING PLAN

Date: 30 September, 2016

INTRODUCTION

This section offers the outline of a plan for the governance, management and operation of the Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's. This plan has been developed without having a facility design, or knowing when the facility will open. Consequently, the plan will need to be reviewed, updated and the detail expanded on a regular basis as the details of the facility and the schedule to bring it online become more definite.

Chapter 2 (Benchmarking) of this study has clarified the factors for success for theatres attached to schools, and they are restated here.

1. support of the school and the School District
2. support from local and regional government if the theatre is to be a resource for the community as a whole. Typically, the amount of this annual support exceeds six figures.
3. clear operating agreement that spells out
 - protocol for priority of use between school and community
 - financial responsibilities
 - management structure
4. cooperative relationship between the Manager of the theatre and the Principal and Drama Teacher in the school is crucial. Notwithstanding an agreement between the School District, local government and the operating society, the School District cannot always speak for the school.
5. up to date, well designed, well maintained facilities
6. professional management and technical staff
7. solid community support through volunteer participation and attendance
8. low operating cost

The first two bullets will be addressed in the last chapter of this report, Raising Capital, Community Support. The rest are covered here.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Independent non-profit society

The chapter on benchmarking has made clear the advantages of establishing an independent non-profit Society to operate a Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's. These include the ability to obtain grants for programming, staff development and acquisition of improved equipment, as well as the opportunity to consolidate relationships with the wider community through active participation of community members, both on the board of directors and as volunteer workers.

The Society's board of directors should be composed of volunteers who are advocates of the arts and who have expertise in business management, law, accounting, programming, education, and fundraising. The Board of Directors will have overall fiduciary responsibility for



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Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's (subject to the terms of an operating agreement with the school district and local government) and should concern itself with long term artistic, operating and financial policy, leaving the day to day programming and management of the facility to the professional staff. We recommend this form of governance for a Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's.

Operating agreement

The benchmarking report has also made clear the importance of establishing an agreement between the school district, local government and the operating Society. The agreement should be set up at the outset, during the design phase of the project, so it can clarify the relationship between the parties regarding theatre design issues. From the operating viewpoint, it should provide guidance on the issue of school vs community use, it should cover financial responsibilities and provide for the clear delegation of management authority.

Management

With the operating agreement in place, the Society should engage an Executive Director with professional experience in both the art and the business aspects of managing a performing arts facility. In a perfect world, the Executive Director would come on board a year before the completion of construction to keep a watchful eye on the finishing details of the new facility. More important the Executive Director will need time to plan the opening events. Moreover, experience says it will take the better part of a year to book the rentals and presentations to make the initial season a success.

Staff

The Executive Director should have the authority to engage, either on an employee, contract or volunteer basis, qualified people for the key areas of marketing, communications and fund development, production and technical direction, front of house (FOH) operations, cleaning and maintenance, box office, administration and finance. The Executive Director should also develop a program for recruiting and training volunteers.

Some smaller theatres have only one full time paid professional person who is responsible for management, marketing, development and administration. Production/technical professionals are engaged on contract as needed, as is the FOH supervisor, whose ushering and concession staff is usually comprised of volunteers.

WorkSafe BC is beginning to pay attention to theatre operations regarding stage safety. Developments in this area should be monitored.

Box Office

The box office function can either be farmed out to one of the ticket sales businesses (Ticket Master, Vendini, etc.) or run in-house on one of the numerous on-line sales software packages available in the marketplace. The theatre can also contract with local retail outlets to sell advance tickets. However sales are made, theatre patrons will want to be able to pick up tickets at the theatre at the time of performance, and the theatre will want to be able to make last minute sales at the theatre. In both cases, computer equipment, staff and a space to accommodate the box office function which is accessible to the public will be needed.



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PROGRAMMING AND MARKETING

Rentals

Renting the theatre is the least risky way to program. Rental clients could include band, choir, drama and dance, etc. groups attached to schools in the district, as well as community groups offering plays, music and dance recitals, and other performances. The theatre could also be rented to artists' representatives looking for touring dates.

The theatre can be rented to commercial and business clients for meetings, plenary and training sessions. Local government can rent the facility for "town hall" public information meetings and public hearings. In both cases, audio-visual and teleconferencing equipment should be part of the theatre's inventory if these opportunities are to be pursued.

The theatre could be rented for film presentations, given professional quality projection equipment and accompanying sound gear.

If the facility I designed to take advantage of the school's teaching kitchen, and provided the agreement with the school district allows for the opportunity, the facility could be designed to support meeting events with catering.

Typically, the operating agreement between the school district and the operating society will provide for favourable rental rates for school events. Society policy will likely set the community non-profit rent at a reduced and perhaps similar amount, and commercial events as well as those from outside the region will likely pay premium rates.

Whatever rates are established, they should also be reasonable and related to the regional market. Benchmarking suggests per-seat rates in the \$3 range for commercial bookings and about half that amount for non-profit organizations, which experience says will be very cost sensitive. Alternatively, the theatre could charge a rental rate of 10-15% of gross receipts against a guaranteed flat rental rate based on the per seat rates to increase its financial participation in successful shows.

Education

Attached to Stelly's Secondary as it is proposed to be, the theatre could offer programs and workshops in the performing arts; acting, dance, music, stagecraft, lighting, other aspects of technical theatre, and playwriting. These activities could be offered jointly with the school's fine arts and local government's recreation programs, on a break-even or better basis.

Presentations

Most community theatres try to offer a varied mix of programming, chosen to appeal to the theatre's identified markets. In smaller markets, it is not always possible to generate the amount of programming needed to make the facility sustainable simply through rentals. A curatorial approach is needed. Theatre management must aggressively pursue attractions which will appeal to the marketplace. As has been said in Chapter 2, presenting is riskier than renting. Nevertheless, it will be necessary, particularly if the sales and marketing strategy is to develop packages - Young Audiences Series, Popular Music Series, Classical Music Series, Live Theatre Series, and the like. Such packages are created out of a rental only policy only through the most extraordinary coincidence.



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Producing

A producer takes all the risk. From obtaining the rights to a property to hiring the creative and performing artists to renting the theatre and marketing the tickets, the producer is on the hook for all the expenses. Seldom are box office receipts sufficient to cover the costs. Subsidy is almost always needed. We recommend that the Society not produce live entertainment at Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's.

Marketing

Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's will need marketing expertise and resources. If the facility cannot afford more than a full time Executive Director, then the one who is hired had better have a well-stocked marketing tool kit. The ability to properly research and understand the market and to develop programs to appeal to that market will have to be signature strengths of the Executive Director.

Marketing tactics will require partnerships with service clubs, schools, businesses and community groups. Programming tactics will include cooperative bookings with other theatres in the region.

Most important, the theatre's offerings must be supported by excellence in customer service before, during and after patrons' attendance at a performance.

At the core of the marketing strategy should be good value. Tickets should be affordable, in the range of \$25 to \$35. Manage expectations with conservative budgeting. Show revenue budgets should be based on an average of these prices at 65% capacity. Expectations in show business are sometimes unrealistic. People think a success rate of less than 90% represents failure. It is worth remembering that in the major leagues, a batting average above .300 is considered excellent.

Most, if not all of the items covered in the Society for a Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's list of potential events (see chapter 1, page 7) fit into the categories listed above. It is the same generic list that virtually all theatres trying to attract audiences from their communities shop from. It is not a list that helps one theatre to distinguish itself from another. This is not an issue when a theatre is "the only game in town". But for the facility proposed by the Society, it matters. As we have said, Stelly's is 11 kms from the Mary Winspear Centre and less than half an hour from the Farquhar, the Royal, the Macpherson, the Alix Goolden. On a given night these theatres can be competing to fill 4,500 seats. To be successful in penetrating the busy market it finds itself in, Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's must discover and develop a distinctive program to distinguish itself in the marketplace. More likely it will be dance or music rather than theatre that becomes the "hook", and a uniquely conceived regular festival has a better chance of making a splash in the marketplace than an entire season. Distinctive programming is the Society's major artistic challenge.

Operating numbers

To develop reliable capital and operating estimates, the project has to be taken to the level of schematic design. Planning for a Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's has not reached this stage. We offer no operating figures therefore, just categories which will be helpful in establishing proper budgets later on in the project development process.



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Income

Rental revenue	# events provided to school district @ agreed rate # non-profit events @ non-profit rate # commercial events @ commercial rate
Ticket sales	# presentation events @ \$average ticket @ 65%
Concessions	Total attendance @ \$estimated per cap
Workshops/Classes	estimated fee x participants x classes
Memberships	Society membership annual fees
Grants	usually aligned with specific projects
Donations	estimate of annual general campaign
Sponsorships	usually assigned with specific project
Total Revenue	

Expense

Staff wages and benefits	\$
Artistic fees and expenses	\$
Production related to rentals	\$
FOH related to rentals	\$
Presentation costs	\$
Marketing	\$
Concessions cost of sales	\$
Utilities, Facility maintenance	\$ some or all of these may be shared with school
Administrative, legal, audit	\$
Total Expenses	\$
Excess of expense over revenue	\$ required subsidy/financing

From the chapter on benchmarking we are reminded that in several cases, a six figure number was needed to balance their accounts. Obtaining this level of support over and above what the theatre can do on its own is another major challenge the Society faces.

When the design for the Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's is more advanced, this plan should now be updated as a series of operating budgets; pre-opening, first year operating, and revised annual pro forma.



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CHAPTER 4 – COMMUNITY SUPPORT, RAISING CAPITAL

Date: 30 September, 2016

INTRODUCTION

In order for there to be an operating plan, there first needs to be a theatre. Generating the community, institutional and government support needed to produce the capital required to build the theatre is the Society's third and greatest challenge.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The Society must broaden its support beyond its present membership to the community as a whole, including youth in school, parents, the mainstream workforce and seniors. This community support must extend beyond the borders of Central Saanich to include performing arts enthusiasts on the Peninsula and throughout the region.

Eventually community support will need to translate into a strong volunteer program which will be needed for successfully staffing Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's.

Broad-based community support will be critical to the success of the capital fundraising campaign, and must be sustained when the theatre is operating and continuing to require annual financial support from the public sector.

The tools required for this campaign to raise community support include "The Case" (described in the following section on capital campaign strategy) and a well conceived ongoing communications plan that will include

- presentations to the School District and local governments, talks to service clubs, business associations, arts councils, performance touring associations, recreation associations, audiences attending performances and the general public wherever it can be found assembled
- development of comprehensive contact lists
- improvements to social media presence
- regular updates through social and mainstream media
- collateral materials as needed
- hospitality events to mark milestone achievements

The communications campaign will operate throughout the entire capital campaign and construction period, and will transform into the communications effort to support the operations of Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's from the official opening onward.

CAPITAL FUNDING STRATEGY

The Society will need to raise the required capital funding from all three levels of government and from the community at large. The following outline will assist in the development of a detailed fundraising plan.



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Campaign readiness study

As a first step, a Campaign Readiness study should be commissioned. This assessment, usually provided by professional fundraising counsel, examines “the case” (the reason and rationale) for the project, tests it with major players in the community and assesses its likelihood of success during the period when the project is on campaign. Typically, the study will consider the entire non-profit fundraising environment in the region (past, present and anticipated), including health and education projects as well as cultural ones.

The Case

The Case tells the story of the project, says a bit about the people who are promoting it, and describes what it is the campaign will be raising money for. Here’s the outline.

the story

- history of the project
- the need for the project
- the due diligence exercised to arrive at the project
- key milestones to date, including support the project has already received
- notes on people involved

project description

- Architectural concept
- Campaign target (included the capital cost estimate, provision to seed an endowment fund and campaign expense budget).
- Business plan (including governance, management, programming and marketing, operating pro-forma)

The Case should be presented in tastefully prepared and produced collateral materials that reflect the quality of the project.

The Target

The campaign target is usually the capital cost of the project (including construction, equipment, fees and contingency), often supplemented by an amount to provide seed money for the establishment of an endowment fund, the revenue from which can be applied to support ongoing operations. The target should also include a budget amount for the cost of the campaign.

The Target (total of capital, endowment and campaign cost) should be broken down into the components of the campaign.

Public sector

- Government of Canada \$
- BC Government, Ministry of Education \$
- Central Saanich, CRD \$



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Private sector

- Lead gift (“Angel”) \$
- Businesses \$
- Organizations \$
- Individuals \$

if the campaign readiness report is positive, the next steps are to plan, organize and implement the campaign.

Campaign planning

Engage fundraising counsel

Professional fundraising assistance should be considered for capital projects, especially when the target is in the seven to eight figure range, as the Community Arts Theatre at Stelly’s will likely be. Among the members of these associations will be found candidates for the role.

- Canadian Association of Gift Planners
<https://www.cagp-acpdp.org/en/about-us>
- CAGP, Vancouver Island Chapter
<https://www.cagp-acpdp.org/en/chapter/vancouver-island-victoria>
- Association of Fundraising Professionals
<http://www.afpvancouver.org/Consultants-Directory.aspx>

Obtain registered charity status from Canada Revenue Agency

- Being able to issue receipts for income tax purposes is absolutely necessary to go to campaign.

Consider campaign leadership

The first key recruit will be the Campaign Chair. This individual will be a visible leader in the community, one who has demonstrated a serious interest in the performing arts, and who has the network and capability to obtain a commitment for a lead gift. List potential candidates at this stage, and consider the most effective way to make the approach.

Confirm campaign target and budget

Having “roughed out” the major categories that add up to the campaign target as set out in the campaign readiness phase, an estimate is now made of the detail of how the target will be achieved. A tool like the Blackbaud Gift Range Calculator will help to determine how many private sector gifts of what amounts will be required.

<https://www.blackbaud.com/nonprofit-resources/gift-range-calculator>

Develop opportunities for recognition

Opportunities for recognition are an essential part of any campaign. Components of the building (the lobby, the auditorium, the stage, elements of the equipment list, the dressing



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rooms, the green room) each have a value assigned, and are offered as opportunities to be named after specific donors.

Government funding sources

Government support change over time. Research what each level of government has on offer for the Community Arts Theatre a Stelly's project. Develop a political plan to support the applications. Write and file grant applications.

Lead gift from the initiators of the project

Charity begins at home. The first gift should be from the members of the group that is promoting the project. In aggregate, it should show that the organization's members are serious about raising the funds needed for the project. This lead gift should be in place before the campaign team is recruited.

Campaign organization

Outline Plan for Campaign Organization

The plan will be an important tool for recruiting the Campaign Chair. It will show that the Society understands the magnitude of the job ahead and that it has the ability to support the Campaign Chair's efforts to recruit campaigners and make key calls. The plan will be developed for both the people and process components of the campaign.

Recruit Campaign Chair

Once the Campaign Chair is on board, the Chair will be consulted on all aspects of campaign organization. The personality of the Chair will determine how "hands on" or "off" the Chair will be.

Recruit campaigners, establish campaign "cabinet"

Put in place the key leaders of the campaign. Campaigns often assign leaders to each of the campaign categories listed above, and together they constitute a "cabinet" for making key decisions going forward.

Recruit campaign staff

Professional counsel may help with the strategic elements of planning the campaign, but they may not be the most cost effective to get the slogging in the trenches done. Most campaigns need a paid manager and some paid administrative help to function effectively.

Develop and produce campaign materials

The campaign will need a "brand" image. It may (or may not) relate to the image of the theatre. Nevertheless, it will have to be developed and used consistently throughout the campaign. An updated version of "The Case", letterhead, business cards, pledge forms will all need to be produced. It should be professionally done to a high standard.



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Establish accountability and reporting systems

Effective campaigns are run on the basis of healthy competition between campaigners, both individually and in teams. Regular meetings (often weekly) require timely and accurate reports on progress to date in terms of pledges against targets. The reporting system must be effective enough to allow campaign leadership and management to be nimble when situations require it. The accounting and reporting system is a key factor for success.

Assign calls

This is the last step before the campaigners “hit the road”. It is often done at an event not unlike a pep rally. Campaigners must have all the tools they need at this point, and the system must be fully up and running to support them.

Campaign implementation

A calendar of Project Milestones should be established and progress tracked against them.

When the feasibility of the campaign is established, and planning and recruiting are complete, confirmation of the lead gift of the campaign together with the proponent’s contribution should announce the launch which all campaigners should attend.

The campaign should not drag on. It should be planned to a reasonable timetable which should be adhered to. It should probably not exceed the period of site prep and construction. The final total of the campaign, cash, kind and pledges, should be announced at the gala opening of the theatre, to which the campaigners should all be invited.

Many gifts will be paid over multiple years. The campaign must retain the administrative capability of following up on pledges and issuing receipts until all pledges have been fulfilled.

CONCLUSIONS

Many theatres attached to schools operate successfully in British Columbia. Often, the school is the only place in a community where there are sufficient resources to locate a theatre. To some extent, the needs of the community and the school can both be met, though there are always issues to be addressed.

The Society faces several challenges to its goal of building a Community Arts Theater at Stelly’s.

The Market

The school is located in a rural enclave surrounded by a large urban area which is well served by performance facilities of many capacities and configurations, including half a dozen in secondary schools. A Community Theatre at Stelly’s will have to compete for attractions and audiences in this marketplace. It can only do so if it is designed so distinctively, and its programming positioned in the marketplace so uniquely that it will be able to penetrate the market and compete with the other venues in the marketplace for artists and audiences.

Ongoing Institutional Support

Community theatres in schools need support from either or both the school district and the local municipality to be successful. Without such support they cannot be sustained. The Society



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must convince the School District and the District of Central Saanich to provide meaningful, ongoing support to the Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's.

Capital Costs

Theatres, even those attached to schools, are not cheap to build. Several million dollars will have to be raised.

The plans outlined in this report are intended to help the Society meet these challenges.



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SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are sprinkled throughout the report. They are summarized here.

Chapter 1 – The CRD Performing Arts Market

that the Society convene the Steering Committee it has proposed comprised of representatives of the School District, the District of Central Saanich and the Society Board, and that the Steering Committee meet immediately to review the Society's goals and to determine in the light of this report whether the Community Arts Theatre or the Performing Arts Learning and Practice Centre best fits the needs of the school, the School District and the community

that the Society monitor closely the progress of the West Shore Performing Arts Centre project

that the Society's directors continue to "benchmark" other theatres attached to schools. A questionnaire format and a list of facilities is provided

that the next phase of the feasibility study develop either the Community Arts Theatre or the Performing Arts Learning and Practice Centre as chosen by the Society's Steering committee, and that Phase 2 begin as soon as practical

Chapter 2 – Benchmarking Theatres in Schools

a balcony for a Stelly's theatre up to 400 seats is not recommended

a stage tower with flying rig is not recommended

a playing area for musicians can be achieved by leaving sufficient space between the front of the stage and the first row of seats to accommodate musicians on the auditorium floor, and separating them from the audience by a short portable wall

for both aesthetic and operational reasons, a separate entrance and lobby is recommended

that showers be included in dressing room facilities

that a rehearsal studio is an absolute necessity, with the understanding that it will serve the school's programs more than it will the community. It should be designed not just as a rehearsal hall, but as a flexible flat floor performance space, with consideration given to public access, performers support and proper technical capability

that the design of the theatre must not compromise the existing Band Room, which is fundamental to the school's performing arts program

that the design team include a professional technical theatre consultant, preferably one who has experienced the difficulties in working through the design problems inherent in theatres attached to schools

that the Society join BC Touring Council, and that this benchmarking report be shared with BC Touring Council and its theatres in schools sub-group

Chapter 3 – Outline for Operating Plan



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that an independent non-profit society provide the governance and management for the Community Arts Theatres at Stelly's under the terms of an agreement with School District 63 and (provided the municipality is on board), the District of Central Saanich

that early in the life of the project, an agreement be made with SD 63 and Central Saanich covering design process, school vs community use, financial responsibilities and funding, the clear delegation of management authority

that the Society plan to hire a theatre professional with marketing skill for the role of Executive Director at least a year before the facility is scheduled to open, and that the Executive Director be authorized to engage technical and other theatre professionals for key operating roles

Chapter 4 – Community Support, Raising Capital

that the Society prepare "The Case" for the project, and set "The Target" for the capital campaign as soon as the capital costs and operating numbers are known

that fundraising counsel be recruited to conduct a "campaign readiness study" to gauge the community's support for a Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's



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Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's - Appendix A

Feasibility Study Phase 1 Participants

The consulting team is grateful to these people who enthusiastically shared their time and expertise.

Society for Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's

- Ron Broda, Chair
- Jan Heinrichs, Vice Chair
- Linda Broda, Director
- Alicia Bartlett, Director
- Michelle Cunningham, Director
- Norbert Ziegler, Director

School District 63

- Victoria Martin, Chair, Board of Trustees
- Barb Menzies, Trustee, Board liaison to SCATS
- Tim Dunford, Trustee
- Mark Fraser, Assistant Superintendent
- Peter Westhaver, Principal, Stelly's SS
- Kim Milburn, Acting Director of Facilities

District of Central Saanich

- Mayor Ryan Windsor
- Councillor Niall Paltiel, Council Liaison to SCATS

Capital Regional District

- James Lamb, Director of Arts Development
- Diana Lokken, General Manager of Finance & Technology
- Colin Plant, Chair of the Arts Committee (also Saanich Councillor and Drama Teacher at Claremont Secondary)

Arts community

- Brad Edgett, Executive Director, Mary Winspear Centre (Charlie White Theatre)
- Lloyd Fitzsimonds, Executive Director, Royal and McPherson Theatres Society
- Jane Butler McGregor, CEO, Victoria Conservatory of Music
- Matthew Howe and Chris Berghuis, Pacific Christian School
- Adrian Sly and Tom Mitchell, Gilbert & Sullivan Society
- Leslie Arnold, Allegro Performing Arts Centre
- Haley Doehnel, Peninsula Players
- Virginia Watson-Rouslin and Glenda Korella, Peninsula Singers
- Wendy Newman, President, Oliver Community Theatre Society

Business community

- Denny Warner, Executive Director, Saanich Peninsula Chamber of Commerce



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Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's - Appendix B

CRD Population Estimates	population			CRD A&C function
	2011 census	2015 est	2026 fcst	
Esquimalt	16,209	16,800	21,100	x
Oak Bay	18,015	18,366	19,100	x
Saanich	109,752	113,493	119,300	x
Victoria	80,017	83,698	84,700	x
View Royal	9,381	10,009	10,700	x
First Nations Reserves (1)	1,678	1,712	1,600	
Core	235,052	244,078	256,500	
Central Saanich	15,936	16,590	17,700	
North Saanich	11,089	11,528	13,000	
Sidney	11,178	11,537	15,600	x
First Nations Reserves (2)	2,965	3,024	3,000	
Peninsula	41,168	42,679	49,300	
Colwood	16,093	16,646	30,200	
Highlands	2,120	2,184	2,200	x
Juan de Fuca EA	4,351	4,792	6,300	
Langford	29,228	33,630	42,100	
Metchosin	4,803	4,989	5,300	x
Sooke	11,435	12,777	15,500	
First Nations Reserves (3)	639	652	200	
West Shore	68,669	75,670	101,800	
Saltspring	10,234	10,664		
Southern Gulf Islands	4,868	5,143		
First Nations Reserves (4)				
Gulf Islands	15,102	15,807	19,900	
Capital Region	359,991	378,234	427,500	
Victoria CMA	344,889	362,427	407,600	

x = participant in CRD Arts & Culture function



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Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's - Appendix C

Feasibility Study Internet Resources

Stelly's Secondary School

<http://stellys.sd63.bc.ca/>

The Boulders Climbing Gym

<http://climbtheboulders.com/>

Saanich School District 63

<https://www.sd63.bc.ca/>

District of Central Saanich

<http://www.centrialsaanich.ca/Home.htm>

CRD Arts Development Program

<https://www.crd.bc.ca/about/what-we-do/arts-development>

Royal & McPherson Theatres

<https://www.rmts.bc.ca/>

Mary Winspear Centre (Charlie White Theatre)

<http://marywinspear.ca/>

Victoria Conservatory of Music

<http://vcm.bc.ca/>

Belfry Theatre

<http://www.belfry.bc.ca/>

Blue Bridge Theatre

<http://bluebridgetheatre.ca/>

Intrepid Theatre

<http://intrepidtheatre.com/>

Kaleidoscope Theatre

<http://kaleidoscope.bc.ca/>

Bunch Centre, Brentwood College

<http://www.brentwood.bc.ca/boarding-life/campus-facilities/t-gil-bunch-centre-for-performing-arts/>

Claremont Secondary School Fine Arts

<http://www.claremontfofa.blogspot.ca/>

Oak Bay High School

<https://oakbay.sd61.bc.ca/our-school/oak-bay-theatre-presents-bye-bye-birdie/>

Four Seasons Musical Theatre at Isabelle Reader School

<http://www.fsmtheatre.ca/>

Saanich Peninsula Chamber of Commerce

<http://peninsulachamber.ca/>



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Entertainment Technician Certification Program

<http://etcp.esta.org/index.php>

Community Arts Council of the Saanich Peninsula

<http://cacs.org/>

Announcement regarding Juan De Fuca Centre for the Performing Arts

<http://www.goldstreamgazette.com/entertainment/369303461.html>

BC Touring Council

<http://bctouring.org/>

<http://bctouring.org/directories/venues>

Canadian Association of Gift Planners

<https://www.cagp-acpdp.org/en/about-us>

CAGP, Vancouver Island Chapter

<https://www.cagp-acpdp.org/en/chapter/vancouver-island-victoria>

Association of Fundraising Professionals

<http://www.afpvancouver.org/Consultants-Directory.aspx>

Blackbaud Gift Range Calculator

<https://www.blackbaud.com/nonprofit-resources/gift-range-calculator>



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Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's - Appendix D

West Shore Performing Arts Centre

WEST SHORE ARTS FORUM RESPONSES

February 28, 2016

Part One: WEST SHORE ARTS COUNCIL

Struggles in bringing arts to our local community

1. **Economic** barriers
2. Lack of **support** for the arts
3. Lack of capacity for **sustainable funding** (arts are woefully underfunded—unlike sports programs)
4. Lack of awareness of **value** of arts programs
5. Using **secondary** spaces—this is not working; some groups have to fix the plan in which they perform, and others are given parameters like “don’t touch the lights”
6. **Accessing** space in **schools** is difficult
7. **Affordable** venues, funding
8. **Misconceptions** that art loses \$\$\$
9. “**Experience**” not “high school” experience—perception
10. **Profile** of the arts is low: it is difficult to find organizations
11. **Getting family “plugged in”** to visual, stage, and comedy performances
12. Getting **arts members** out into the **community** (as volunteers)

What is lacking in arts on the West Shore

1. A **central** large facility with **consistent scheduling**
2. An awareness of potential for **youth** engagement
3. More **adult** performing experiences
4. Performance venues: **accessibility, flexibility, affordability, and storage**
5. Arts identified as a **political** agenda item
6. Central space for arts of **all genres**
7. **Bridge** and **coordination** between arts groups
8. A **cohesive** plan **integrating** all municipal arts experiences
9. Support—We risk losing performance arts groups, who might have to go elsewhere (the upcoming performance at Oak Bay)
10. **FOMO**: Fear Of Missing Out
11. **IDENTITY OF WEST SHORE ARTS**: identifying the West Shore as an artistically rich region

Arts Council’s role in the community

1. First priority: Advocacy with politicians (5)
2. Second priority: Financial support (1); Conduit to bringing art (1); Increase local municipality support (1); Encourage “buy in from influencers” (1)



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3. Third priority: Financial support (1); Conduit to bringing art (1); Increase local municipality support (1)
4. Identified as a role, but not ranked: Advocacy with politicians (3); Financial support (1); Conduit to bringing art (1); Increase local municipality support (1); Bridge between different arts groups (1); Social media (1); Inform what is available (1)

IDEAS arising from discussion

1. **Communication**, type of communication, and quality of communication, are very important. Arts council survey—important
2. Create a **buzz** amongst groups: community, politicians, moms and dads, businesses
3. Learn from successful **models**
4. **ACT** rather than wait for another report
5. **Targeting youth** is key
6. **PUT ARTS FIRST FOR WESTERN COMMUNITIES**

Part Two: A PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE

Draft Vision and Objectives

1. Vision Statement: replace West Shore with **Southern Vancouver Island**
2. Be **inclusive of all arts**, not focused only on “Performance”—describe the centre as an Arts Centre, an Arts and Cultural Centre, or a Centre for the Arts
3. Objectives could be amended as follows:
 - To provide an *accessible* centre of excellence for the presentation of professional and amateur performances
 - To encourage participation in *the arts* by providing appropriate space, training facilities, and a “hub” of teachers and learners
 - To create and *enhance* economic development in the West Shore

Suggestions for size, features, facilities of the proposed Arts Centre

1. **Build 650 seat theatre first**: to generate **excitement** and support for a space that the community can really be **proud** of, also to attract critical **community, government, and business partners** (for the photo ops!)— **economic** drivers. A 650 seat theatre can be blocked into smaller audience spaces, and, with hydraulic seating, would be much more flexible—creating **dance** and **convention** space as well.
2. **A modular design** with a smaller theatre first because the 750 seat theatre in Edmonton was a failure (Please note that only one comment indicated a preference for a smaller theatre first.)
3. **Accessibility** is key: **economic, physical** ; also allow **mobility** for performers and patrons
4. **Flexibility**: multiple **accessory spaces**; **multi-use** meeting rooms for public gatherings
5. Growth is in **Western Communities** and beyond, NOT “in town”
6. **Restaurant** and **rental** spaces—all will support the Centre financially
7. Equip theatre with **projection ability**—could be part of the **Victoria Film Festival**.



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8. **Recording** facilities
9. **Gallery** rental space
10. **Storage** space for performers and renters

LOCATION, location, location!

1. **Centralized:** in a **vibrant centre** where activity is already growing—“a hub of entertainment precinct”; close to **public transit, restaurants, and ample free parking**. Much **infrastructure** will already be in place (\$\$\$saving).
2. Adjacent to business lands
3. Near Parkway, a highway, or main artery
4. Specified potential sites:
 - Langford Parkway (accessibility and land), off Leigh Road, Goldstream/Jacklin, or behind RONA’s
 - Park ‘n Ride
 - Colwood Corners
 - SILKWINDS excavation site
 - Near Juan de Fuca centre
 - Leigh Road
 - Sooke Road
 - West Hills area due to growth in area and route of buses and trolley
 - Gravel pit—by Metchosin and Veterans’ Memorial
 - Western Speedway (old Mr. Tubs)
 - Near Bear Mountain exit

Suggestions for Funding

1. Canada 150—federal funding
2. Municipal involvement—operating costs
3. Charitable endowments
4. Incentives for support
5. Corporate funding—Jim Pattison?
6. Crowd source funding
7. Political champions
8. Local celebrities returning to the island
9. Social media—push pay
10. Funding Drive—charge to cell bill
11. Public Radio, commercial
12. Legacy performances
13. CGI
14. TD Bank
15. Business partners
16. Telus



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17. Constant awareness for the centre—advertise everywhere
18. Seat Sales: for fundraising
19. Ongoing fundraising programs: eg Thrifty Foods contributes to Belfry when audience members who are grocery shopping show ticket stubs after a performance
20. Leverage pledges
21. Life insurance policies –beneficiaries
22. Wills--Bequeath \$\$ to the centre
23. Note the “payback in arts tourism”

IDEAS arising from discussion

1. Learn from Port Theatre, Surrey Arts Centre, and anywhere else that will help us get it right.
2. We need to capture all of the detailed requirements of every group in order to then make decisions and list requirements accordingly. Musical theatre people feel like they’re not being listened to—space suitable for symphony may not be so for musical theatre; for example, what about set storage? Note that sports all have individual spaces, while the arts are struggling to come together in one building.
3. Suggested Name: South Island Centennial Arts Centre
4. Combine potential for infrastructure projects —eg, waste treatment and arts facility

THE DREAMS...five years from now...

1. Our very own arts centre for the West Shore and environs
2. A viable performance space
3. The elegance of *Dinner and a Show*
4. Collaboration between the wide diversity within the arts community, which has made this Arts Centre possible!!
5. Opportunities for underprivileged youth to discover their untapped passion for Arts
6. A home for WS/Vic arts groups to collaborate, educate, further grow the community around them and with which they are interdependent.
7. The whole community feels they are part of the new centre and it’s paid for!
8. Acoustics and a beautiful space
9. Music education/appreciation
10. A centre for diverse arts forms, big and small; local, national, and international
11. Wide co-operative community access
12. All of the arts/performing arts will unite and become a strong sustainable community of love for a theatre, with heart and soul
13. Family theatre built
14. Identity of West Shore as a vibrant arts community
15. Opportunities for youth
16. First Nations, Public Art, and inclusion of cultural events at the centre



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.....AND HOW TO MAKE THEM COME TRUE!

1. Promote funding opportunities through town and district councils
2. Work with all relevant partners
3. Fundraising performances
4. Keep working with SASI/Coast collective to create a vibrant cultural community.
5. Whatever it takes!
6. Start a social movement and fundraise in an artsy way
7. Join arts groups: WSAC, JDFPACS, Coast Collective, stay connected to these organizations and to the 4 Seasons MT. Be involved.
8. Volunteer and attend planning meeting.
9. Continue to support and be part of the process
10. Promote local performers through ongoing productions
11. Be part of communicating the importance and relevance of this centre
12. Mobilize a dormant volunteer force among churches
13. Speak to my people about donations and volunteering; continuing lobbying
14. Promote education through technology
15. "West Shore Arts Council needs to find professionals in their industry to help find/develop a clearer vision."



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Community Arts Theatre at Stelly's - Appendix E

Benchmarking – details of each theatre/school

Bell Performing Arts Centre

- attached to Sullivan Heights Secondary School, Surrey
- owned by Surrey SD 36
- opened 2002
- <http://www.bellperformingartscentre.com/>
- local population, 468,000, part of Metro Vancouver
- Member, BC Touring Council

Governance, management and programming

- Operated by SD 36
Steven Goodman, Manager, goodman_s@surreyschools.ca
Andrew Elliot, Associate Manager, 604-507-6357, elliott_a@surreyschools.ca

mission/mandate/artistic policy

- To provide a performance and gathering space for SD 36 and the community at large

resident companies

- SD 36 Fine Arts Festival and other school district events utilize about 35% of the time in the theatre.

Protocol for determining priority between school and community bookings

- First come first served, though the theatre tries to accommodate Sullivan Heights who book 5 years in advance
- Regular user groups book 5 years in advance, no one gets preferential treatment

Facilities

seating capacity

- orchestra (728 + 6 wheelchair) and balcony (324 + 4 wheelchair) = 1,052 + 10 wheelchair, the largest professional theatre in the Fraser Valley

theatre configuration

- proscenium, sprung stage, fly tower, acoustic shell, choral risers, orchestra pit in Gala Lift

production support

- dressing rooms – 2 principal (5 + 4), 2 chorus (16 + 26); green room; laundry

FOH

- must use Bell's box office or Ticketmaster
- Lobby sales - 15%



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Bell Performing Arts Centre

rental rates

- Average \$1,900; maximum \$2,300
- Services, cost recoveries
<http://www.bellperformingartscentre.com/> Schedule of Rates

Theatre events

About 250 events per year, all rentals

Don't track attendance as school and church numbers aren't relevant

How the numbers work

Budget

- Earned last year \$608,000
- There are no grants or subsidies. School Districts aren't eligible.
- Expenses \$710,000

bottom line responsibility

- All revenue is earned through rent, box office surcharges, concession and labour mark up. Don't charge for most of the school district activity so in lieu a bit of a loss on operations is accepted. The District considers the theatre to operate at break if it were paid full rate for the District use of the space.
- SD 36 covers any operating loss. The Secretary Treasurer of the District is the financial administrator of the theatre.

Staffing

Management

- Manager reports to the Secretary Treasurer of the District

technical

- Technical administrator reports to the manager
- Universal Show Systems is contracted to provide technical services

FOH

- CUPE BO Mgr, FOH Mgr supplemented by volunteers

Factors for success

- Large theatre to serve a major metropolitan community and one of the largest school districts in the country



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Centre Stage Theatre

- attached to Summerland Secondary School
- owned by SD 67 (Okanagan Skaha)
- opened Nov 22, 1987
- <http://www.summerland.ca/parks-recreation/facilities>
- <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Center-Stage-Theatre/156563877717835>
- local population 11,000, a quarter of an hour north of Penticton

Governance/management/programming

- Managed by Parks & Recreation office of the District of Summerland in accordance with a joint use agreement. Theatre Management group is made up of 5 School District Employees, 2 District of Summerland Employees, & 2 technicians.
- Nicole Lawrence, Accounting Assistant, Summerland Parks & Recreation, nlawrence@summerland.ca books the theatre

Protocol for determining priority between school and community bookings

- Covered by agreement made in 1987 between the School District and the District of Summerland. "School use" is defined as during school hours on school days plus 35 selected evenings during the school year, rent free. "Community use" is defined as all other times at rents defined by the Theatre Management Group. The Theatre Management group coordinates the operation of the facility.

Facilities

Seating capacity - 295

Theatre configuration

- proscenium, orchestra pit beneath apron

Production support

- Theatre technician provided with every rental of facility
Green room – includes male and female dressing rooms and washrooms, a common room with audio relay
Cyclorama, new main & mid-stage traveler curtains, stage manager desk, 10 ft loading door, house sound system, lighting system, hearing assist system

FOH

- No Box office - tix sold at local coffee shops and art centers, and through websites
- Concessions are informal, provided by renter

Rental rates

- Rehearsal Rate: 35.50/hr. (includes Technician)
- Technical Booking (includes tech for 5 hours) \$335.00
- Additional Technician Hours – \$27.00/hr.
- Extensive Lighting - \$48.00/hr.
- Meeting Rate \$247.00 (noncommercial, includes a tech for 5 hours)



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Centre Stage Theatre

- Matinee or Piano Recital \$157.00 (includes tech for 3 hours)
- Grand Piano \$56.00

Theatre events

- School events – In 2015 - 17 events (71 days)
- Community events – In 2015 - 15 events (20 days) each year fluctuates depending on the community involvement. In 2016, 36 days are already booked as of August
- Local theatre company takes a week
- School drama department stages an annual musical
- All events are rentals.

How the numbers work

Budget

- Revenue from events promoted by the school is collected by the school, all other events are booked through the District's Recreation Department and all rental fees are collected by the District of Summerland.
- District of Summerland revenue - \$4,845(2015) \$7,025 (2016 to date)
- District of Summerland expense - \$6,510 (2015) \$6,160 (2016 to date)
- School District keeps its own numbers.

bottom line responsibility

- Summerland is committed to providing this community theatre service to the residents, students and community.
- Finances depend on the number of community events and fluctuates year to year
- The District of Summerland has an \$10,865 operating budget for the facility that is intended to cover its operational expenses
- School District 67 also budgets to cover their designated share of operating expenses

Capital and major maintenance

- The joint use agreement lists the areas of responsibility of each party and each allocates to the capital budget based on an annual team meeting. Each group manages its own capital budget.
- Grant opportunities are applied for when eligible and available.
- In the past projects have been done as a collaboration as well as individually. Each year in June we have a team meeting to discuss the past season, the upcoming season and any necessary repairs, updates and capital items.
- In the past year School District 67 painted the entire lobby, bathrooms, replaced bathroom fixtures, doors, counters in the lobby and did an overall update of the area.
- The District of Summerland replaced all of the main drapes and mid-stage curtains.



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Centre Stage Theatre

Staffing

Management

- The drama teacher and the Principal of the school work with the Booking clerk and the Recreation Manager on the day to day dealings of the theatre. Higher level items are managed by the Recreation Manager and Facilities Manager. (Each organization takes financial and administrative responsibility)

Program/admin support

- Booking clerk is provided by the District of Summerland

Technical

- Contracted by the District of Summerland for all community events

FOH

- Volunteer

Factors for success

- Good working communication between the two organizations (SD67 & The District of Summerland), reasonable expectations with regards to facility use, an active arts community, a continued interest in always improving the facility and its operations.
- Well outlined guidelines for use, fees & expectations
- A generous operating budget
- An enthusiastic group willing to spearhead funding, community projects, grant applications



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Clarke Theatre

- Attached to Heritage Park Secondary School, Mission
- Owned by Mission School District 75
- Opened 1996
- <http://www.clarketheatre.ca/>
- https://www.facebook.com/search/18844292549/local_search?surface=tyah
- local population, 36,400, across the river from Abbotsford (13 kms)
- Member, BC Touring Council

Governance, management and programing

- Operated by SD 75, Theatre Manager Bronwen Sutherland, 604 820-3961, bronwen.sutherland@mpsd.ca
- City of Mission has an interest in the theatre and sometimes supports it with grants, but there is no agreement between the SD and the City.
- Early on, the University of the Fraser Valley was also involved in the theatre, but the university pulled out and the theatre closed for a time.

Mission/mandate/artistic policy

- The Clarke was built with support from the community
- The Clarke is a regional community theatre for civic and touring events

Regular users

- Dance schools

Protocol for determining priority between school and community programming

There is no priority booking. All bookings are first come, first served. No special days or times of day are reserved for school use. Everyone pays to use the theatre (though the school pays less).

Have to have a tight agreement about how the theatre will be operated. In the absence of an agreement, theatre operations have to rely on the personal relationships between the theatre manager and the school's Principal and drama teacher. If these relationships don't work, the theatre will have problems. In the absence of an agreement, a drama department's default position can be that the theatre is a classroom. In a community theatre situation, the theatre can only be a classroom within carefully defined limits.

Facilities

Seating capacity

- 702; 496 main, 206 balcony

Theatre configuration

- proscenium, sprung stage, orchestra pit, fly tower

Production support

- 4 dressing rooms, green room



Hamilton McClymont

Clarke Theatre

FOH

- No box office. Renters and promoters must use a commercial seller (Ticketmaster, for example), or sell their own tickets.
- concessions sold by theatre, users merchandise can be sold for 10%
- The lack of a separate entrance militates against the success of the theatre. The theatre lobby experience cannot really be duplicated in a school lobby or hallway. Nor can a Green Room work well when it has to be a drama classroom as well.

Rental rates

- \$320 for school uses, \$1,600 for professional promoters (including 2 techs and volunteer usher staff)

Theatre events

The Clarke does about 230 events per year; 30 are school bookings, the rest are all rentals (the Clarke does not present) – Festival competitions, dance studios, promoters, community groups, independent schools, home schoolers.

How the numbers work

Budget and Bottom line responsibility

- The SD develops and runs the budget. The SD is disqualified from applying for grants (Gaming, BC Touring Council, federal grants, etc). The SD has to absorb any operating loss. This explains the risk adverse “rent only” strategy.
- Custodial costs can be high. In some theatres, a renter can pay more for custodial costs that they do in rent.

Capital and major maintenance

- SD has full responsibility. Sometimes the City will assist with a grant to cover equipment replacement or some other one-time expense requirement.

Staffing

Management

- Theatre professional manages the theatre, employed by the SD, reports to the Secretary/Treasurer
- Supported by a booking clerk employed by the City who uses the municipality’s system to manage bookings
- Supported by part a share of a clerk employed by the school

Technical

- On call casuals, non-union (though CUPE makes overtures)
- Hard to attract technicians so far up the valley

FOH

- Volunteer



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Clarke Theatre

Factors for success

The Clarke is supported in the community – people gave money to get it built. This support also translates into attendance.

The large capacity broadens the range of promoters and acts that can make financial sense of an appearance.



Hamilton McClymont

Frank Venables Theatre

- attached to Southern Okanagan Secondary School, Oliver BC
- Owned by School District 53, and leased to Regional District of the Okanagan Similkameen
- opened September, 2014 (with soft opening in February, 2014)
- <http://www.venablestheatre.ca/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/VenablesTheatre/?fref=ts>
- local population, 5,000 in Town of Oliver with another 5,000 in surrounding district (serves Osoyoos, Keremeos, Okanagan Falls and to some extent, Penticton as well)

Governance, management and programming

- Operated by Oliver Community Theatre Society under the terms of agreement between the Society, SD 53 and the Regional District of the Okanagan Similkameen (RDOS, Area C “Rural Oliver” and Town of Oliver).
- Prior to the fire which destroyed the former school and the original 600 seat Frank Venables Theatre, it has been decided that the school would be renovated and as part of the job, the School District and local government (Town of Oliver and Area C of the RDOS) had agreed that local government would contribute \$4 million to the construction of a new theatre in the renovated school. Following the fire, when it was clear that a completely new school would have to be built, the School District and the Ministry, recognizing the previous agreement and public support for it, agreed to build a new theatre and have it run by an independent community based non-profit society. Cost of the new theatre was between \$10 and \$12 million.
- A cooperative relationship between the Theatre Manager and the Principal and Drama Teacher in the school is crucial. Notwithstanding the agreement between the School District, local government and the Society, the School District does not always speak for the school.
- Interim Theatre Coordinator, Deb Martin, 250-498-1626, manager@venablestheatre.ca
- The Society’s annual report is published on its website

Mission/mandate/artistic policy

- Advance local, nation and international presentations in the South Okanagan
- Develop local amateur and professional performing arts
- Encourage local audiences, artists, students to engage in the performing arts

Protocol for determining priority between school and community events

- Joint use agreement describes terms of lease, operating agreements and reporting functions. An addendum (which can be updated annually) describes policy and protocol for school and community use
- SD gets 30 bookings per year gratis and can make the bookings 14 months in advance (2 months earlier than anyone else)
- Beyond that, bookings are first come, first served, and the SD pays the children and youth rate for additional bookings
- There are no grandfathered events



Hamilton McClymont

Frank Venables Theatre

Facilities

Seating capacity

- 373 + 8 wheelchair locations and up to 25 additional seats on one raked level

Theatre configuration

- proscenium, no fly tower, no purpose built orchestra pit

Production support

- dressing rooms for up to 18 divided with folding door, 4 washrooms (no showers)

FOH

- Spacious lobby which overlooks the valley and is the face of the school.
- Theatre has its own on-line box office (established earlier this year) which renters are encouraged to use
- renters can set up their own concession

Rental rates

- Lobby \$300; Theatre 6 hour blocks: commercial \$650, community \$400, Youth/kids \$300
- Services, cost recoveries; Lighting and sound personnel charged at \$40/hr

Theatre events

2015-16 season

- 50 ticketed events
- 151 days of use (rehearsals, tours, public and private events)
- 214 volunteer services
- 12,000 attendance
- The Society currently presents on a fairly limited basis, and hopes to grow this aspect of its programming.

How the numbers work

Budget

- Earned revenue is about 30%. The balance comes from the Town and Area C through RDOS.

Bottom line responsibility

- The Society manages the budget; ultimately the SD and the RDOS have to ensure the financial sustainability of the theatre

Capital and major maintenance

- A \$130k fund for theatre seats held by the SD was not completely spent (the seats were donated) so the remainder is spent on small ongoing capital purchases
- *Frank Venables Theatre*



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Frank Venables Theatre

Staffing

Management

- Theatre manager

Technical

- 2 professional technicians contracted on a call out basis

FOH

- Volunteer
- Part time box office coordinator

Factors for success

The community voted 75% “Yes” in the referendum held to authorize a mil rate increase to support the theatre’s operations

The community supports the theatre by using it and by attending events

The theatre is now the major performing arts venue in the South Okanagan



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Kay Meek Centre

- Adjacent to West Vancouver Secondary School, the Centre is attached to the school through a series of lock-off doors.
- Property is owned by School District 45
- opened May 2005
- <http://www.kaymeekcentre.com/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/KayMeekCentre/?fref=ts>
- local population, 44,000; part of Metro Vancouver
- member, BC Touring Council

Governance, management and programming

- Operated under Joint Use Agreement with West Vancouver School District by West Vancouver Arts Centre Trust (40 year term)
- Executive Director, West Vancouver Arts Centre Trust, Rob Gloor, 604-981-1178
Elaine McHarg, Marketing Director
Client Services & Operations Manager, Mina Khatam, 604-981-1175,
mina@kaymeekcentre.com

Mission/mandate/artistic policy

- To engage and inspire our community through artistic excellence and learning experiences that enrich our lives and create a passion for the performing arts.
- To act as an inclusive, energetic catalyst for vibrant and diverse performing arts experiences.
- To collaborate as a productive and committed partner of the arts.
- To lead in the celebration of cultural achievements in our community.

Affiliated companies

- Early Music Vancouver, Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, Arts Club Theatre, Vancouver Youth Symphony Orchestra, West Vancouver Youth Band, Pandora's Vox, BC Boys Choir, Vancouver Kiwanis Music Festival, Pro Arte Dance, Perform Art Studio (dance), Summer Youth Conservatory

Protocol for determining priority between school and community events

The Trust has a long term facility use agreement with the SD which sets out a set number of days (about 80) when the SD can use the theatre. These days are tied to the school calendar, and the school schedules many activities about two years in advance. The theatres host the Drama/Theatre production programs of three high schools, and each school tends to alternate their use between the Grosvenor and the Studio. These productions by the high school groups run for approximately 2-3 week blocks per school year. The theatre is also used for Christmas and end of year events.

The Trust also has an agreement with the District of West Vancouver which requires the theatre to serve the community in ways defined in the agreement. The quid pro quo is an annual grant in the \$150,000 range.



Hamilton McClymont

Kay Meek Centre

Community groups and presentations are usually booked less than two years in advance. Last minute requests by the SD are handled on an as available basis.

Neither the Grosvenor nor the Studio are teaching facilities, the school has separate drama and dance studios. Occasionally the school will request the Grosvenor for voice work.

The long term agreements and the third party management structure defines and clarifies school/community use.

Facilities

Seating capacity

- Grosvenor; 488 seats in continental arrangement including 6 wheelchair positions
- Studio; 146 to 216 seats

Theatre configuration

- Grosvenor Theatre; proscenium, ¼ height fly system (36'), orchestra pit under stage apron, acoustic shell, choral risers
- Studio; flexible flat floor space

Production support

- Rehearsal space, dressing rooms dedicated to each theatre, green room, laundry

FOH

- The Centre operates a box office which renters may, but are not required to use. The Centre is currently reviewing its box office policies
- Centre operates a concession, renters may sell merchandise for 15%

Rental rates

- Commercial & non-profit rates vary by day of week, by rehearsal and performance highest weekend rates are \$1660 (commercial), \$1115 (non-profit)

Theatre events

- Approximately 50,000 tickets are printed annually for events in the theatres.
- The Centre presents attractions as well as rents the theatres.

How the numbers work

Budget

- Budget varies between \$1.3 and \$2 million, depending on the numbers for presentations which vary from season to season.
- The Centre does not have many of the operating expenses other performing arts centres of its scale have, they are covered by the SD.
- Most revenue is earned, annual grant of about \$150,000 from the District of West Vancouver is provided as part of a service agreement, private sector support is growing



Hamilton McClymont

Kay Meek Centre

Bottom line responsibility

- The Trust

Staffing

Management

- Executive Director

Program/admin support

- Director Marketing, Administration, Membership/Development

Technical

- TD, Technician

FOH

- Client Services/Operations, Box Office Supervisor

Factors for success

The impetus for the Kay Meek Centre was a group of arts-minded community members who worked on the project over a 20 year period. In the late 1990s momentum was created when Kay Meek committed a major initial gift (\$1 million) to support the capital project. Kay Meek was a strong supporter of the performing arts and hoped others would follow her lead with similar gifts, though other major gifts were significantly less than the million. The initial request for allocated land could not be met by the various levels of government. The School District proposed that the Centre be built to replace the West Vancouver Secondary School auditorium. Another major gift from Kay Meek (bringing her contribution to \$8 million) initiated the design and construction process. The first performance was held in November, 2004 on the day she died at the age of 98. It's fair to say that a key factor for success was "an angel". Kay Meek's leadership inspired the community to support the theatre, and it does,

The Centre is "the only game in town" in West Vancouver.

The Centre's role in both the school and the community is clearly defined.



Hamilton McClymont

Massey Theatre

- attached to New Westminster Secondary School
- owned by School District 40
- opened 1949
- <http://www.masseytheatre.com/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/masseytheatre/?fref=ts>
- local population, 66,000, part of Metro Vancouver
- member, BC Touring Council

Governance, management and programming

- Massey Theatre Society manages the theatre independently
Executive Director, Jessica Schneider, 604-517-5900

Mission/mandate/artistic policy

- Neither a civic nor a school facility, the Massey is a professional arts organization which works to support the performing arts throughout Metro Vancouver
- Catalyst for a vibrant, expressive community; a stage where any dream is possible since 1949.

Strategic plan

- A 3-year strategic plan was put in place in 2015; its goals are
 - develop local artistic capacity and community engagement
 - enhance reputation for excellence
 - create conditions for long term growth and sustainability

Resident companies

- Royal City Musical Theatre, Royal City Youth Ballet, New Westminster Symphony Orchestra, Maple Leaf Singers, Mushtari Begum Festival, SD 40 Fine Arts

Protocol for determining priority between school and community events

- School District and resident companies book their regular dates, theatre management presents to fill the gaps. It hasn't been necessary to establish a formal protocol for priority.

Facilities

Seating capacity

- 1260; 867 orchestra + 10 wheelchair positions, 393 balcony

Theatre configuration

- proscenium, fly tower (hemp) which must be operated by Massey staff, orchestra area on main floor for 23, no pit wall, no orchestra shell, choral risers



Hamilton McClymont

Massey Theatre

Production support

- dressing rooms in 4 and 8 person configurations for up to 88 (not wheelchair accessible), 4 washrooms, scene shop (the Massey has a scenery & props rental program) no green room, no rehearsal space

FOH

- Box office is run as a separate business unit serving multiple venues; renters must use the Massey box office
- Massey offers some promotional support
- food & beverage operated by Massey for its account renters may sell merchandise – Massey takes 15% of gross
- The Society operates the Plaskett Gallery (see website)
- Theatre shares entrance with school

Rental rates

- Commercial & non-profit rates vary by day of week, by rehearsal and performance highest weekend rates are \$2245 (commercial), \$1810 (non-profit)

Theatre events

- Has varied between 180 and 220, low end caused by uncertainty
- School events: 47 fine arts events, 1000 of the school's 2000 students in fine arts
- The Massey actively presents attractions, once its school and community obligations are looked after.

Annual attendance

- 85,000 to 125,000; 100,000 average

How the numbers work

Budget

- \$900,000
- City of New Westminster provides \$59,000 to subsidize rent of New Westminster non-profits
- School District provides the theatre for \$1 per year, Society pays the SD per use for utilities, custodians and custodial supplies
- Some revenue is derived from Gaming funds and from private sector support
- Earned revenue is about 80-85% of total

Bottom line responsibility

- The Society is responsible for the theatre's finances

Capital and major maintenance

The School District has been wrestling with the future of New Westminster Secondary School for years, and by extension, the future of the Massey Theatre. The City has been involved as far as



Hamilton McClymont

Massey Theatre

the theatre is concerned, for the Massey is the largest venue in the town. In April, the School District decided that the Massey will be renovated, not demolished. It remains to be seen what arrangement the City and the School District will make to accomplish this.

Staffing

Staff manages both the Massey Theatre and since 2014, the city owned 361 seat Anvil Centre Theatre located in downtown New Westminster

Management

- Executive Director

Program/admin support

- Administrator, Programming Assistant
- Contract marketing and fundraising support

Technical

- TD, 1 Assistant TD
- On call technicians

FOH

- Patron Services, Ticket Manager, Ticket Assistant
- On call patron services staff

Factors for success

- Longevity
- seating capacity
- theatrical capacity



Hamilton McClymont

Max Cameron Theatre

- attached to Brooks Secondary School, Powell River
- owned by School District 47
- Built about 10 years ago
- <http://www.maxcamerontheatre.ca/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/maxcamerontheatre/?fref=ts>
- Market area, 22,000
- Board Member: BC Touring Council, CITT member, PR chamber of commerce, PR Women in Business and PR arts council

Governance, management and programming

- Managed and programmed by Theatre & Facilities Manager, Jacquie Dawson, who works for the School District, 604-483-3900, jdawson@sd47.bc.ca

Mission/mandate/artistic policy

- No written policy

Affiliated organizations

- No local community groups are tied to the theatre.
- The Met Live in HD, National Theatre Live are regular presentations

Protocol for determining priority between school and community events

In May school department heads (drama, music, choral) are asked for their preferred dates for the coming school year ahead of community bookings or presentations. Theatre & Facilities Manager meets with school personnel to fine tune dates.

The school has daily use of flex blocks with two weeks advance booking

Superintendent can book at anytime on a space available basis

All bookings must be made through the Theatre & Facilities Manager

Manager has been trying to get the SD to consider a written policy for the operation of the theatre. Until one is prepared and agreed to, this statement seems to cover the situation: "Serve the community as well as the school; the manager brings in bookings".

Facilities

Seating capacity

- 402; 244 + 4 wheelchair locations on the main level, 154 balcony. The first two rows of the centre section can be removed for production purposes.

Theatre configuration

- proscenium, fixed grid, no fly tower, no purpose built orchestra pit



Hamilton McClymont

Max Cameron Theatre

Production support

- dressing rooms for up to 18 divided with folding door, 2 washrooms, 1 is wheelchair accessible with shower
green room with sink, fridge, microwave
wardrobe with washer/dryer, laundry and janitor sinks,
- Other spaces
school teaching facilities include digital media centre, acoustically engineered choral room, film and video recording studio, dance and drama studio

FOH

- Box office: through Powell River Academy of Music, Breakwater Books, and at the door.

Concessions

- renters may set up marketing table for merch

Rental rates

- Average \$580 per day

Theatre events

School

- School events/ concerts dramas and school related presentations (lectures and PowerPoint type events with “motivational” style guest speakers)

Community

- Community events – RX wellness – film festivals – fundraisers, funerals etc
- MET and National Theatre LIVE broadcasts
- 6 presented live shows (programmed and facilitated by the Theatre Manager)

How the numbers work

Budget and Bottom line responsibility

- All financial matters are handled by the School District Treasurer and accounting department, which allocates the budget

Capital and major maintenance

- SD Treasurer allocates funds as able

Staffing

Management

- Theatre & Facilities Manager reports to Trustees through Superintendent and Sec/Treasurer; relates to School Principal but doesn't report



Hamilton McClymont

Max Cameron Theatre

Technical

- Technical Director

FOH

- 1 FOH Manager casual for events only + 2-4 volunteers lobby

Factors for success

Modern well-equipped theatre which is the only professionally managed theatre in town



Hamilton McClymont

Michael J Fox Theatre

- Attached to Burnaby South Secondary School
- Owned by Burnaby School District 41
- Opened 1993
- <http://www.michaeljfoxtheatre.ca/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/michaeljfoxtheatre/?fref=ts>
- local population, 223,200, in the middle of Metro Vancouver
- Member, BC Touring Council

Governance, management and programming

- Michael J Fox Theatre Society manages the theatre on a handshake deal with SD41
Jim Dobbs, Director of Operations, (604) 290-1323, jim.e.dobbs@gmail.com (retiring)
Monica Vriend, Business Services Coord (CUPE) (604) 664-8875 (retiring)
info@michaeljfoxtheatre.ca
Dave McRae, Director Tech Ops, Dave.McRae@sd41.bc.ca

Mission/mandate/artistic policy

- “Fostering excellence, building community”

Resident organizations

- Home to many spring dance recitals

Protocol for determining priority between school and community events

Unwritten agreement between SD 41 and the Michael J Fox Theatre Society
School gets about 15% of time in theatre and priority scheduling for school calendar events (Remembrance Day, Christmas events, end of school year concerts and events). Once the school events are booked, they are locked in and the Society can book the remaining dates with rentals to community groups

Facilities

Seating capacity

- 613 – 163 lower orchestra, 450 upper; two levels are separated by a wide cross aisle

Theatre configuration

- proscenium, sprung stage, orchestra pit area 36 x 14, full flies, choral risers

Production support

- Dressing rooms and green rooms (1 available all day, 1 available after school hours)

FOH

Lobby entrance is separate from school entry.

Box Office

- available but not mandatory, renter can chose



Hamilton McClymont

Michael J Fox Theatre

Concessions

- Concessions provided by theatre

Rental rates

- Commercial and non-profit vary by time of day and day of week from \$1380 to \$2065. Premium for stat holidays.
- Services, cost recoveries
website spells out what's in the rent and what's extra

Theatre events

About 350 per year

School - 15%

Community - 85%

Michael J Fox Theatre is a road house – it does not present at all.

How the numbers work

Budget

- Budget is set by the Society, accounting support from the District

Bottom line responsibility

- There is no shortfall as the operating model has been extremely minimalist. The District pays none of the operating expenses.

Capital and major maintenance

- Capital and major improvements are a shared arrangement - the Society raises funds through the annual Golf Tournament and the District contributes when it can

Staffing

Management

- Director of Operations Jim Dobbs reports to the Society
- Business Services Coordinator Monica Vriend (CUPE), reports to SD41 Sec/Treasurer
- At this point the two longest-serving staffers involved in admin and operations are retiring. Splitting the reporting lines to Society and SD has worked effectively.

Technical

- Dir Tech Ops David McRae, reports to Society; Theatre Technician

FOH

- Guest Services Assistant, reports to Society + casual FOH Mgr and usher staff

Michael J Fox Theatre



Hamilton McClymont

Michael J Fox Theatre

Factors for success

- The Michael J Fox Theatre is centrally located in Metro Vancouver.
- The Burnaby School District has made a commitment that the theatre should serve the community.
- A favourite son of Burnaby has lent his name to the theatre.
- The theatre is suitable and has the capacity for dance recitals



Hamilton McClymont

Revelstoke Performing Arts Centre

- attached to Revelstoke Secondary School
- owned by School District 19, built for under \$4 million
- opened 2011
- <http://revelstokeartscouncil.com/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/revelstokeperformingartscentre/?fref=ts>
- local population; 7,100 (isolated)

Governance, management and programming

- Revelstoke Arts Council (contact Theatre Manager Miriam Manley, 250-814-7386, miriammanley@gmail.com) managed under terms of brief MOU with SD 19. RAC wants to have a proper service agreement with the SD that involves the Town
- member, BC Touring Council

Mission/mandate/artistic policy

- The Revelstoke Arts Council provides community leadership in the development, promotion, stimulation and support of arts and cultural heritage for present and future generations
- The Theatre will showcase excellence in the performing arts to inspire, educate and foster passion for the arts throughout the community and beyond.

Regular extended use clients

- Revelstoke Theatre Company, Flying Arrow Productions, SD 19

Protocol for determining priority between school and community events

Not clearly spelled out. Drama department tends to want more time than needed for its activities. Local Theatre companies request that three weeks be blocked off, one week for tech and two weeks for their run. They would prefer more time to build and also always need at least six discreet rehearsals leading into the three weeks. Dates are constantly being discussed

Facilities

Seating capacity

- 275 including 4 wheelchair positions, in continental arrangement

Theatre configuration

- proscenium, plywood stage with dance floor, orchestra pit (never been used), choral risers
- theatre could attract more bookings if it were more flexibly configured. The fixed seat, raked auditorium cannot be used for flat floor events (receptions, cabaret performances, etc)
- School Drama Room is a small, flexible flat floor space with a lighting rig. Can be used for performances and can provide space for a small bar. The area is not large enough to simulate the stage of the main theatre.



Hamilton McClymont

Revelstoke Performing Arts Centre

Production support

- large dressing room can be divided for Men/Females, no showers
- HD film projection on large 24 ft screen

FOH

- Lobby is a school hallway that services the theatre and a very large gym. The Arts Council has made a great effort to make it NOT look like a school hallway. Signage, drapery and lighting are all used. Still, it's a school hallway.
- Box office is on line with ticket pickup at two downtown locations or at the Centre prior to performance
- Lobby sales
10% to the theatre
- Bar is located under large staircase

Rental rates

- Community \$200, commercial \$400
- Services, cost recoveries; host \$25/hr, tech \$32/hr, custodial \$30/hr

Parking can be an issue when the local hockey team is playing as the lot is shared and insufficient for both venues

Theatre events

About 80 events last season

Annual attendance, about 7-8,000, roughly the population of the town

Then Revelstoke Arts Council is able to present attractions as well as rent the theatre.

How the numbers work

Budget

- Municipal - Revelstoke is a resort municipality and can make grants for tourism marketing and tourism infrastructure. The Revelstoke PAC falls into the second category. RAC hopes to become a line item in the municipality's budget
- Other governments - Columbia Basin Trust, BC Touring Council, Gaming to cover staff and other
- Private sector - growing local corporate support
- Earned - \$11,000 in rentals covers \$1,000/month charge from School District for utilities (August is dark)

Bottom line responsibility

- Need 5 non-profit events per month to cover School District cost
- Revelstoke Arts Council is responsible for the bottom line



Hamilton McClymont

Revelstoke Performing Arts Centre

Capital and major maintenance

- School District looks after stuff it paid for in the theatre, Arts Council raises funds for stuff it paid for or has identified as a new need

Endowment

- Arts Council has a small one - \$10,000, annual revenue \$120

Staffing

Management

- Arts Council has an Executive Director and a Theatre Manager

Technical

- 1 Lighting and 1 Sound tech are contracted on call

FOH

- FOH Mgr contracted on call, rest are volunteers

All staff are trained in hospitality and school protocols

Factors for success

New theatre is being well branded and attracting the equivalent of the town's population annually. Artists like to play here because they are well looked after.



Hamilton McClymont

Sagebrush Theatre

- attached to South Kamloops Secondary School
- Owned by SD 73 which leases the facility to the City of Kamloops
- opened - sometime in the 80s, with a major renovation shortly thereafter
- <http://www.sagebrushtheatre.ca/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Sagebrush-Theatre/145922428789741?fref=ts>
- member, BC Touring Council
- local population, 86,000

Governance, management and programming

- The City of Kamloops engages Western Canada Theatre to manage the venue.
- WCT's Client & Audience Services Manager, Heather Regan, 250-372-3216 Ext. 522, hregan@wctlive.ca manages the venue

Mission/mandate/artistic policy

- Western Canada Theatre Company will provide the Kamloops Regional Community with challenging, professional live theatre. The company will entertain, educate, enrich, and interact with the cultural mosaic of its community.
- Western Canada Theatre Company will promote and assist the performing arts through the provision of educational, theatrical and artistic opportunities and services and through the management and operation of facilities. All of this will be accomplished with artistic integrity.

Strategic plan

- in process with WCT's Board of Directors

Resident companies

- Western Canada Theatre, Kamloops Symphony, SD73 gets 100 block bookings

Protocol for determining priority between school and community events

SD 73 gets 100 block bookings per year (8am to 3pm or 3pm to 11pm). Base rent is complimentary, additional services are paid for. South Kamloops Secondary used to get all of the dates, but now the 100 is allocated to schools throughout the school district. Still, SKSS is the most frequent user. The drama program has three "assemblies" per year, each preceded by 4 days of rehearsals = 15 dates. Another regular use is Young Peoples' Concert (4 times per year, 5 days each = 20 dates) attended by 7,000.

Facilities

Seating capacity

- 706 seats on one raked level with cross aisle, 12 wheelchair locations

Theatre configuration

- proscenium, 50 ft fly gallery, orchestra pit accommodates 30-40 (no dedicated chairs)



Hamilton McClymont

Sagebrush Theatre

Production support

- Rehearsal space 39' x 18', located above dressing/green room area

FOH

Lobby entrance is separate from the school entrance

Box office

- through <http://www.kamloopslive.ca/>

Concessions

- 15% of gross sales goes to Sagebrush Theatre operating revenue

Gallery

- 4 – 6 exhibits per year, 2 of which are SD73

Rental rates

- \$930 against 10% of gross box office commercial, \$640 against 8% commercial- amateur (such as dance studios) \$450 non-profit, \$0 for SD73 up to 100 blocks.
- Includes TD (8 hours), Guest Services staff (4 hours)

Theatre events

- 190 public events and 80-90 rehearsal days.
- School - 100
- Community – 89
- Commercial-amateur – 16
- Commercial – 15/20
- Annual attendance – 85,000 to 100,000 (a little more than the population of the city)

The Sagebrush only rents, but WCT, as the Manager, produces five main-stage shows a year. It is a complex relationship as WCT is treated as a multi-user client, but also manages the space. The theatre manager is very careful to remain neutral so that the community does not get the impression that WCT is favoured over other community users.

How the numbers work

Budget

- \$223,000 City of Kamloops, \$53,000 SD (basically covers janitorial and utilities), \$200,000 earned

Bottom line responsibility

- Sagebrush Theatre (WCT)

Capital and major maintenance

- We have a \$.50 per ticket service charge, and we also receive monies annually from SD73 and the City specifically for capital projects.



Hamilton McClymont

Sagebrush Theatre

Staffing

Management

- Client & Audience Services Manager

Technical

- TD full-time, year round & ATD (full-time, 10 months), several casual technicians

FOH

- Supervisors (paid casual employees) and volunteer ushers (200 approx.)
- Volunteer Coordinator (paid a flat rate per event requiring volunteers)

Factors for success

Very active and supportive community, and the only professional venue in town of that size. We are able to handle events from an annual dance recital up to Gordon Lightfoot or Jann Arden. For example, WCT did Mary Poppins last season, and in a town of approx. 85,000, we had an attendance of almost 11,000. The theatre is very busy and in-demand, with the lowest rental rates in the province. This allows us to be the foundation for commercial acts touring in the interior. We also have low ticket fees, and non-union technicians, with a very low charge-out rate.



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