

ROYAL THEATRE



McPHERSON PLAYHOUSE

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the
ROYAL & McPHERSON
theatres society

FY 2019: ANNUAL REPORT

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2019 BOARD PRESIDENT REPORT

On behalf of our Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the 2019 Royal and McPherson Theatres Society (RMTS) Annual Report.

2019 was a busy and exciting year for the Capital Region's two historic theatres. The Royal Theatre and the McPherson Playhouse saw dance, music, theatre, opera, comedy, lectures and Broadway come alive on stage as we welcomed over 203,000 people at 255 events, a 22% increase in attendance and 15% increase in number of performances from 2018.

In 2019, the RMTS undertook the development and launch of Access to the MAC, a pilot program to support local not-for-profit arts organizations in the region. The first two recipients, Flamenco de la Isla and Victoria On Stage Musical Theatre received support to develop projects, reach new audiences and build capacity by providing resources to offset the cost of using the McPherson Playhouse, a premier mid-size theatre. Both organizations presented performances at the McPherson Playhouse in July 2019 to enthusiastic audiences. We thank the Laurence & Hazel Burt Memorial Fund through the Victoria Foundation, The Larch Fund through the Victoria Foundation, and an anonymous donor through the Victoria Foundation for supporting the pilot program. After a successful first year, we look forward to being able to continue to offer this program to support the diverse arts community in the summer of 2021. The RMTS board remains committed to the vision of ensuring that both theatres are available to more presenters (commercial and not-for-profit alike), more diverse audiences and more opportunities for the citizens of this region to enjoy a wide and vibrant offering of performing arts.

After 13 years, the RMTS administration office moved from its location in the CRD building to its new home in the Counting House. This building was also the location of Victoria's first multi-screen cinema and is very fitting to be the new home of our organization. Thank you to the staff for seamlessly making this transition without service disruption.

I would like to acknowledge the tragic passing of our long time employee Adam Wilkinson in April 2019. Adam was a veteran of over 40 years at the Royal Theatre and the McPherson Playhouse and was known and respected by the arts community for his commitment to his craft. I will miss the chats we always had at the staff Christmas party.

Executive Director Lloyd Fitzsimonds retired at the end of 2019, after 20 years of leadership and dedication to the theatres. We thank Lloyd for his years of service and wish him a happy and relaxing retirement. A nationwide search was conducted by the board and we are pleased to have Franz Lehrbass join the organization as executive director. Franz has a proven track record as a professional manager and brings a strong background in the arts community. Additionally, his hands-on experience caring for a historic arts venue makes him a great choice to lead the RMTS.

Our society has the privilege of managing the theatres on behalf of their civic owners and region's citizens. We are grateful to the municipalities of Oak Bay, Saanich and Victoria for their commitment to arts and culture and to the Capital Region District staff for their support and professionalism.

On behalf of the Society, I thank Rick Schick, Oksana Dexter and Greg Damant, who have completed their time on the board. Thank you to the artists, organizations and audience members who continue to support and celebrate arts, culture and entertainment in this region. Finally, thank you to our staff and board members for their continued dedication and hard work. It is a privilege to work alongside you.

Lorne DeLarge, *Board President*



2020 WELCOMES A NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

On January twenty-first I commenced my role as executive director. Beyond all that was new to me, I was struck by the bench strength of the RMTS. In getting to know our board of directors, administration staff and theatre team, I recognized a diversity of sophisticated perspectives, deeply developed skill sets, collaborative insights and inspiring commitment to our mission – enriching the quality of life in the region, through a sustainable and relevant performing arts centre. With enthusiasm, I began applying myself to the work of the society.

How long ago January twenty-first now seems. Within weeks the context of our lives changed as we adapted to the Covid-19 pandemic. Its effect is profound. Our theatres closed, we are without revenue and the pandemic's duration is unknown. As our industry is predicated on mass assembly and discretionary spending, the details of our recovery are unclear.

Despite this existential threat to the society, there is reason to be encouraged. The members of the RMTS team have adapted remarkably to the pandemic, applying their skills and commitment in tackling many new challenges. With challenge comes opportunity: the RMTS team has supported local organizations and commercial promoters alike in guiding them through the details of rescheduling or canceling events. In working together in practical ways to solve urgent challenges, we have taken opportunities to strengthen relationships. For example, we have configured and deployed software tools for ticketholders to donate the value of their purchased tickets to local performing arts organizations. How encouraging it has been to discover this community's generosity in providing such vital support. In these and other ways, we are working with our partners in the performing arts.

I must thank the board of directors and senior RMTS staff – past and present – for prudent financial stewardship in setting aside financial resources for a rainy day. This forward-thinking gives us options, and necessary time to adapt during these uncertain times.

I must particularly thank my predecessor Lloyd Fitzsimonds for his successes in heroically restoring the Royal Theatre, developing a sophisticated and highly professional team, and applying his encyclopedic knowledge of the performing arts in his skilled leadership of the RMTS for two decades. As Lloyd points out, "The Royal and McPherson will be key to the community recovery after the Pandemic is over. As they were following the Flu of 1918, and two world wars. They will be the place the community comes together to celebrate a new beginning." As we draw encouragement from this knowledge and from each other, let us press on.



Franz Lehrbass, *Executive Director*

WELCOME TO THE ROYAL & McPHERSON THEATRES SOCIETY

The Royal and McPherson Theatres Society acknowledges that the McPherson Playhouse and the Royal Theatre are on the ancestral, traditional and unceded territories of the Lekwungen peoples.

Recognized for diverse and valued performances, professional standards and historic spaces, the beautifully maintained Royal Theatre and McPherson Playhouse are in their second century serving the Capital Region as the premier performing arts venues and play an integral role in enriching the cultural life of the community.

For over two decades, the Royal and McPherson Theatres Society (RMTS) has managed the theatres on behalf of their civic owners and, by extension, the region's citizens, visitors and community. The RMTS manages all aspects of the theatres, including the administration, concessions, front of house, production and box office, in order to facilitate the use of approximately 75 groups a year. The Box Office and Front of House departments provide service to over 200,000 patrons annually, setting the stage for an exceptional customer service experience, from ticket purchase through to the closing curtain.

The RMTS is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors consisting of three Municipal Councillors, six Elected Directors and five CRD Appointed Directors, who work to maintain, preserve and further develop the Royal Theatre and McPherson Playhouse by providing governance and management of the organizations resources.

The Royal Theatre is owned by the Capital Regional District and receives funding from the municipalities of Saanich, Victoria and Oak Bay. The McPherson Playhouse receives funding from its sole owner, the City of Victoria.



ROYAL THEATRE



McPHERSON PLAYHOUSE

2019 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Lorne DeLarge, *President*
Raj Wirk, *Vice President*
Byron Smith, *Past President*
Tiffany Gartner-Bouffard, *Treasurer*
Judy Scott, *Secretary*

Councillor Marianne Alto
Tom Burley
Bruce Cameron
Gregory Damant
Christopher Devlin

Iain Hooey
Nathan Lampard
Councillor Tara Ney
Councillor Ned Taylor
Richard Schick

MANAGEMENT TEAM





The RMTS is managed by an experienced professional team:

Lloyd Fitzsimonds *Executive Director*
David Anderson *Front of House Manager*
Karen Ainey *Web & Software Application Manager*
Hilary Briton-Foster *Assistant Technical Director*
Warren Busby *Assistant Technical Director*
Derek Cooper *Box Office Administrator*
Nancy Downer *Finance Manager*
Sheelagh Drever *Finance Assistant*
Tom Heemskerk *Assistant Technical Director*
Derry Hunley *Box Office Supervisor*
Ainslee Jessiman *Programming & Communications Associate*
Brian Johnson *Custodian*
Randy Joynt *Manager of External Affairs*
Darcy Lipsey *Finance & Communications Associate*
Blair Morris *Technical Director*
Mandy Niddrie *Manager of Client Services*
Melissa O'Shea *Box Office Manager*
Alison Palidini *Finance Assistant*
Robert Rawson *Assistant Front of House Manager*
Cameron Stewart *Assistant Technical Director*
Kathleen Stewart *Custodian Supervisor*
Adam Wilkinson *Assistant Technical Director*

The management team is supported by **235** full and part time theatre professionals, creating:

- **41 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Jobs**
- **$2,494,000 Total Employment Income**

OPERATING HIGHLIGHTS

The Royal Theatre and McPherson Playhouse witnessed another memorable year of enriching experiences in arts and entertainment, invigorating senses, engaging minds, arousing emotions and thoroughly entertaining the community.

The Royal and McPherson Theatres Society understands these invaluable experiences would not be possible without gratefully acknowledging our municipal funding partners:

- Royal Theatre receives a total **$100,000** operating grant contributed by Oak Bay, Saanich and Victoria
- McPherson Playhouse receives a **$350,000** operating grant from Victoria
- **89%** of the RMTS revenues are earned from theatre operations
- **$8,467,746** Total Box Office Ticket Sales





CAPITAL PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Throughout 2019, a number of capital projects took place at the Royal Theatre, McPherson Playhouse and administration office.

Three automated LED Aryton Mistral lighting fixtures were added to the inventory at the McPherson Playhouse. These automated moving lights combine the newest compact engineering with a veritable array of gobo patterns and beam shaping effects. The Mistral produces an extremely wide array of subtle to saturated colours with its powerful 300 watt white LED source.

Upgrades to the lighting department also occurred at the Royal Theatre with the addition of new automated light products from both Aryton and Vari-Lite. The Mistral and Vari-Lite fixtures bring reliable and accurate LED lighting to blend in with our inventory of automated and conventional incandescent lights.

The completion of the Circle Rail lighting position at the Royal Theatre was thoughtfully planned and constructed to be as great a benefit to local presenters and touring companies as possible. While providing an additional angle from which to project light and video, the circle rail is designed to be as visually unobtrusive as possible. With good weight bearing capacity, the circle rail can host conventional and automated lights of any kind. Additional ETC Smartbar2 dimmers, power circuits and signal cables were installed to bring ultimate flexibility to this lighting position.

Finally, after many years residing in the CRD building at Centennial Square, the Society embarked on an administration office move to a newly renovated office located on Broad Street, nestled conveniently between the Royal Theatre and McPherson Playhouse.



LED ARYTON MISTRAL LIGHTING FIXTURES



AUTOMATED LIGHTS & CIRCLE RAIL



ADMINISTRATION RENOVATION & MOVE

ACCESS TO THE MAC

Access to the MAC helps local artists and not-for-profit arts organizations in the Capital Region with annual budgets under a million dollars create or refine artistic work, reach new audiences and build capacity by providing resources to offset the cost of using the McPherson Playhouse during the summer months. The Access to the MAC pilot program launched April 2019, with the first two recipients presenting their work at the McPherson Playhouse in July. The 2019 pilot program was supported by: The Laurence & Hazel Burt Memorial Fund through the Victoria Foundation, The Larch Fund through the Victoria Foundation and an anonymous donor through the Victoria Foundation. The 2019 recipients were:





Victoria On Stage Musical Theatre Society | Nunsense
July 10-14, 2019
2 technical days, 3 performance days awarded

The Order of the Little Sisters of Hoboken take over a high school auditorium to hold a fundraising variety show to raise money to bury several sisters (who were accidentally poisoned by their cook). They must inter the nuns before the health inspector comes and finds the dead nuns in their freezer! Fraught with hilarity, both Catholic and otherwise, we watch as 5 nuns try to perform their planned performance amidst chaos and calamity.

VOS is a non-profit, volunteer driven organization established in 1945 with the purpose of bringing top quality live musical theatre to Victoria and giving aspiring young singers and performers the opportunity to display their talents.

ACCESS TO THE MAC

Flamenco de la Isla Society | Victoria Flamenco Festival- La Otra Orilla (RITE) | July 27, 2019 | technical & performance day awarded

RITE exposes the relationship between body, rhythm, voice and guitar. At the heart of this artistic proposition lies an intimate conversation where each element reveals itself while defining the other. La Otra Orilla's new traditional format is thus an initiatory journey that will engage both the aficionado and the newcomer to the art of flamenco.

The Flamenco de la Isla Society is a non-profit society with a mandate to promote and develop the art of flamenco in Greater Victoria and Vancouver Island. Their goal is to inspire artistic expression and collaboration, provide performance opportunities for arts, strengthen creative liaisons with the business community and encourage public access to the art form.

Access to the Mac Testimonials:

"Being new to VOS, I may have started a bit tentative. Now that I have this show under my belt, I would really like to work with VOS again."
-Peter (VOS' Nunsense Music Director)

"Access to the MAC was a great opportunity for our technical department to share their expertise and work with artists and organizations new to the McPherson Playhouse."
-Warren (Head of Audio/Assistant Technical Director, RMTS)



"RITE was one of the best flamenco shows I have seen in Victoria in the last 25 years! The performers were all exceptionally talented and the collaborative between dance, music and lighting was stunning! My enthusiasm for flamenco and live performance has been renewed. I feel inspired to pick up my own guitar again, as well as continuing to explore my creativity as a dancer."
-A.S. (Audience member for Flamenco de la Isla Society performance)

ROYAL ONSTAGE PRESENTS



FLORIAN SCHULTZ



KOBIE BOYKINS



BRYAN SMITH

STORYTELLING AT ITS BEST, UP CLOSE AND LIVE AT THE ROYAL THEATRE!

During 2019, our Royal OnStage National Geographic Live speaker series featured three more world-class explorers whose remarkable storytelling and visually stunning imagery and video delighted, surprised, and engaged audiences of all ages during both student and public presentations.

In 2019, we welcomed almost 2,200 eager youth to our student presentations. Students between grades three and twelve, from public, private and home schools within five different school districts between Victoria and Nanaimo attended these presentations, offering them a unique opportunity for an up close and personal experience featuring inspiring stories of conservation, exploration and adventure with explorers, photographers, filmmakers, and scientists.

Reviews from teachers and students highlight the impact of the shared experience between these distinguished explorers and the audience:

"It was fantastic - enjoyed by students and teachers alike!"

"We loved that there was speaking and then little video clips and pictures to look at, that was incredibly engaging."

"It was awesome. We attended all talks last year as well."

Florian Schulz | Photographer | Into the Arctic Kingdom
His multi-year quest to document the Arctic took photographer Florian Schulz to the ends of the Earth. He camped for weeks in jarring winter conditions, accompanied traditional Inuit hunters and sailed the arctic waters, all to get an intimate look at life in the Arctic.

Kobie Boykins | NASA Engineer | Exploring Mars
Few events in the last decade of space exploration have captured the world's imagination like NASA's ongoing Mars Exploration Program. In 2004, the successful deployment of the Mars Exploration Rovers Spirit and Opportunity launched a new era of scientific investigation of our nearest planetary neighbour.

Bryan Smith | Extreme Filmmaker | Capturing the Impossible
In this edge-of-your-seat presentation, Bryan showed what it means to adventure with purpose, and why he believes the best expeditions are the ones with a healthy chance of failure.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING



BALLET VICTORIA

Throughout 2019, the Royal Theatre and McPherson Playhouse welcomed a variety of organizations who created extraordinary theatre experiences that educated, challenged, inspired and delighted young performers and audiences.

The Capital Region is home to several notable local organizations that provide opportunities for youth to receive theatre production and performance experience as well, including Kaleidoscope Theatre for Young People, Canadian College of Performing Arts, Victoria Operatic Society, Victoria Academy of Ballet, Dance Unlimited, Dansko Studios, Allegro Performing Arts, Boston Dance Collective, Pearson College, Shawnigan Lake School and St. Michaels University School. All of these organizations work with children in the cast and often crew, with many also providing training and mentorship, creating invaluable opportunities to nurture young talent by enabling them to participate in every aspect involved in the production of their shows.

Other local organizations find various opportunities to engage young audiences in their seasons as well, the Victoria Symphony through their Community Children's Programs, Pacific Opera Victoria through their Student & Family Preview, Dance Victoria through their "Pay Your Age", "Nutcracker Kids" Programs and annual Nutcracker performances and the Naden Band with their student matinees.

The RMTS engages young audiences through our Royal OnStage National Geographic Live student presentations. Hosted at the Royal Theatre, this speaker series features real-life topics connected to the BC school curriculum by providing a unique opportunity for Vancouver Island students to experience photographers, explorers, filmmakers and scientists as they share their personal stories of conservation, exploration and adventure.

Outside the Capital Region, national and international touring companies also bring a variety of popular children's performers to the Royal Theatre and McPherson Playhouse.

ROYAL THEATRE EVENTS



SERENA RYDER



SNOWED IN COMEDY TOUR



BALLET VICTORIA & VICTORIA CHORAL SOCIETY

ROYAL THEATRE EVENTS

The elegant 1416-seat Royal Theatre has graced the skyline of the Capital Region since 1913 and serves as Vancouver Island's largest premier venue for the performing arts. While preserving its original Rocco/Renaissance Revival style décor, the Royal elegantly fuses 19th century architecture with 21st century technology, enabling it to host a variety of arts and entertainment options, from Broadway tours to drag shows, dance to comedy, opera to jazz and symphony to rock concerts, plus much more!

- **$6,849,048** Total Box Office Ticket Sales
- **147,284** Total Attendance

LOCAL NON-PROFIT: 88 PERFORMANCES



VICTORIA SYMPHONY



BALLET WEST | DANCE VICTORIA



GREGORY PORTER | JAZZFEST

COMMERCIAL: 60 PERFORMANCES



RAFFI



JERSEY BOYS

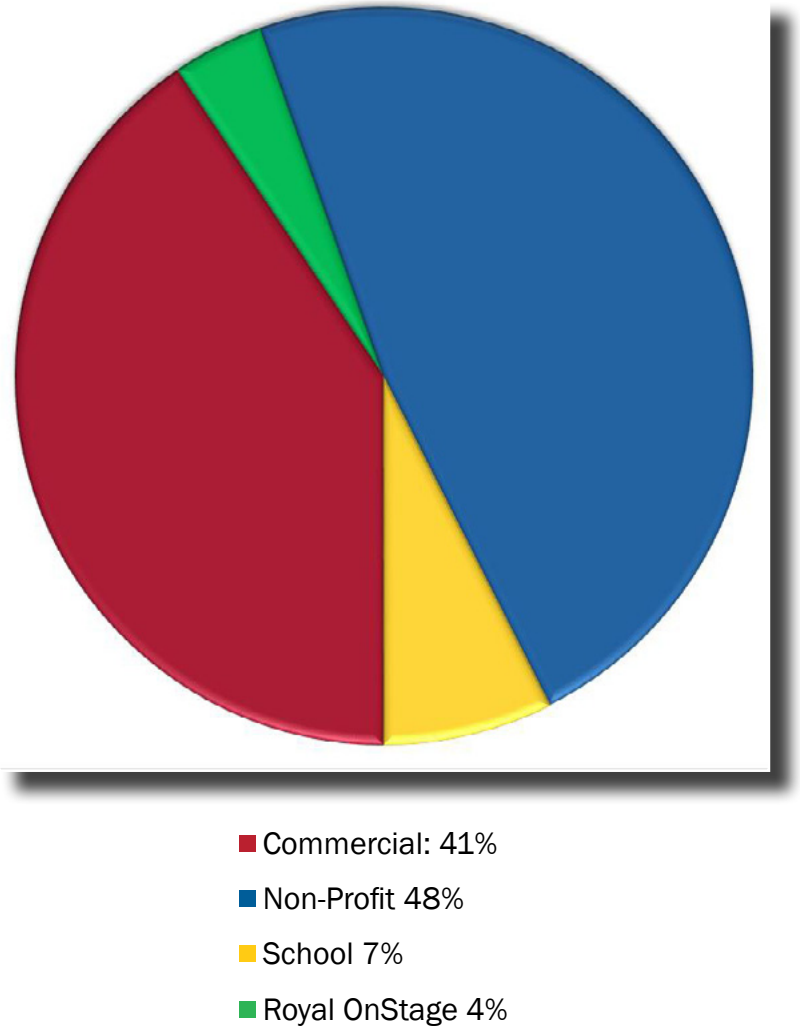


KIP MOORE

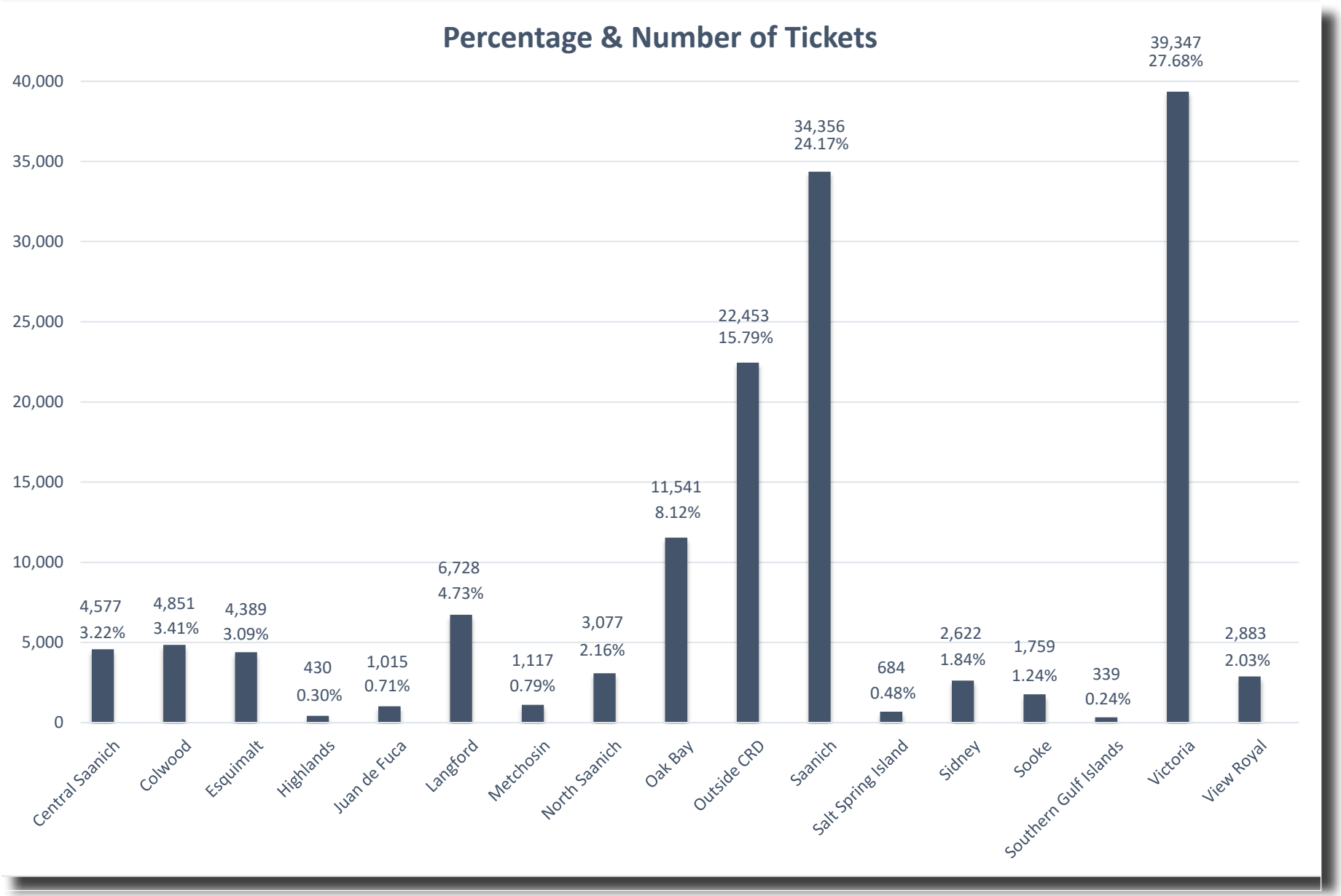
ROYAL THEATRE USE DAYS: NON-PROFIT / COMMERCIAL



COLIN JAMES



ROYAL THEATRE ATTENDANCE BY MUNICIPALITY



McPHERSON PLAYHOUSE EVENTS



DANCE UNLIMITED



CHANTAL KREVIAZUK & RAINE MAIDA



THANK YOU FOR BEING A FRIEND

McPHERSON PLAYHOUSE EVENTS

Located in the heart of Old Town Victoria, the McPherson Playhouse has been the home of intimate theatre in Victoria since opening in 1914 as part of the Pantages chain of theatres built across North America. Evolving from its vaudevillian roots, the McPherson hosts a variety of professional, community and amateur events throughout the year. The 772-seat theatre continues to be one of the most impeccably maintained and finest examples of theatres from its era still standing in Canada today.

- **$1,588,698** Total Box Office Ticket Sales
- **56,460** Total Attendance

LOCAL NON-PROFITS: 76 PERFORMANCES



CANADIAN COLLEGE OF PERFORMING ARTS



VOS MUSICAL THEATRE



KALEIDOSCOPE THEATRE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

COMMERCIAL: 31 PERFORMANCES



GLASS TIGER



SKERRYVORE

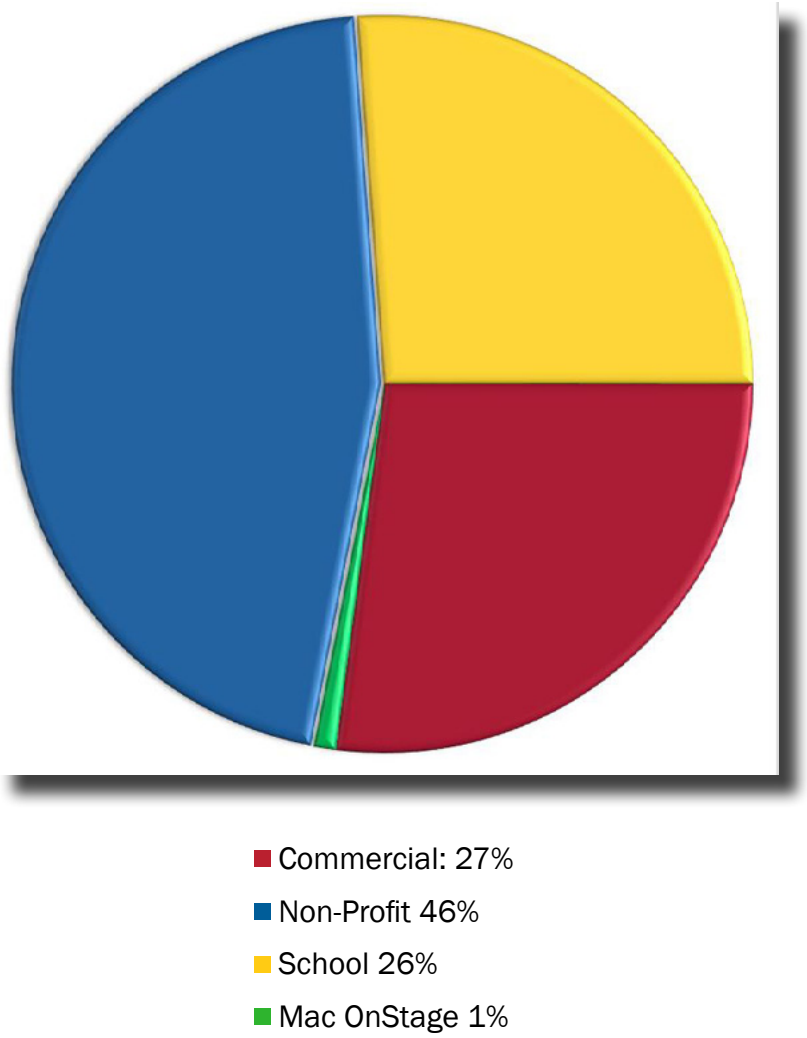


LED ZEPAGAIN

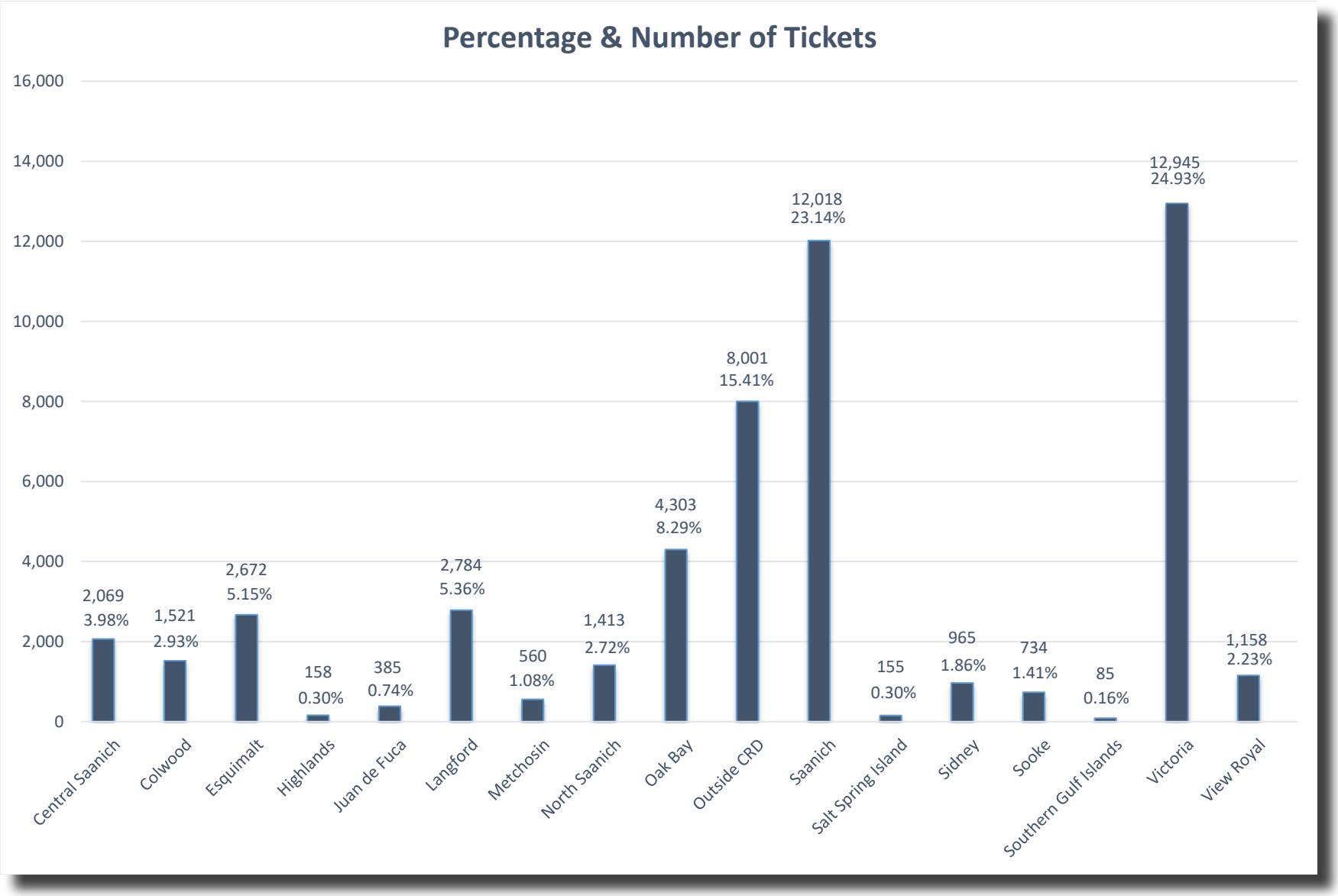
McPHERSON USE DAYS: NON-PROFIT / COMMERCIAL



MATT MAYS



McPHERSON PLAYHOUSE ATTENDANCE BY MUNICIPALITY



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Royal and McPherson Theatres Society strives to find opportunities throughout the year to collaborate with local organizations in the community.

In collaboration with the Victoria Arts Council, the RMTS opened the Gallery at the Mac to receive a splash of colour in the upper lobby featuring Escapes—paintings by James Ascher which was on display throughout the fall until early December, visually delighting audiences attending performances at the McPherson.

For a third year, the RMTS co-presented with The Comic Strippers to bring their fictitious male stripper troupe to the McPherson. Played by a cast of some of Canada's best improvisational comedians, they performed a hilarious improv comedy show semi-undressed and completely unscripted.

For 107 years, the Naden Band of the Royal Canadian Navy have been regular performers at both the Royal Theatre and the McPherson Playhouse. In partnership with the RMTS at the Royal Theatre, the immensely popular Naden Band Christmas Toy Drive continues to be a valuable annual contribution to the community as it has been for the past 41 years.

Finally, the RMTS had the opportunity to collaborate with the Esquimalt Recreation Centre to provide backstage tours for theatre summer camp kids ranging in age from 6 to 11 years old, with a hope that exposure to the theatre may plant a seed that could grow into a lifelong interest in the performing arts.







COMMUNITY EVENT DONATIONS

The Royal and McPherson Theatres Society is pleased to support many community and charity events throughout the year. In 2019, the RMTS facilitated ticket donations to 54 not-for-profit and community event fundraising efforts, which included the following organizations:

3rd Arbutus Scout Group
Art + Fare
BC Assessment United Way
BC Cancer Foundation
Bike to Work
Braefoot Community Association
Broken Promises Rescue
Bunny Barn
Campus View Elementary
Canadian Cancer Society
Cat's Cradle Animal Rescue
Chief and Friends Foundation
Child Find
Children's Health Foundation
CNIB
Community Living Victoria
Cook Street Village Activity Centre
Cordova Bay Preschool
Dancers 4 Kids
Dee's Orphan Kitten Fund
Discovery School
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Fort Properties
Gorge Soccer
Greater Victoria Down Syndrome Society
Island Montessori
Kiwanis
Lakehill Preschool
Lakewood Elementary PAC
Lansdowne Music Program
Make-A-Wish
Matthew Conway Charity Classic
Mount St Mary's Hospital
Provincial Employees Community Services Fund
Restorative Justice
Reynolds Musical Theatre
Rock 4 a Reason
Spectrum Community School
Story Theatre
Synergy Sustainability Institute
The Chamber
Theatre SKAM
UBC Faculty of Medicine
Uvic Department of History
Uvic Students' Society
Vancouver Island South Film & Media Commission
Victor School
Victoria Academy of Ballet Scholarship Society
Victoria Curling Club
Victoria High School
Victoria Hospitals Foundation
Victoria Humane Society
Victoria Legal Support Staff Association
Walk for ALS

SUPPORT FOR LOCAL NON-PROFITS

Proudly supporting local non-profit organizations, the Royal and McPherson Theatres Society provides discounted fees and charges for the use of the Royal Theatre and the McPherson Playhouse to the following groups:

































the
ROYAL & McPHERSON
theatres society

Royal Theatre
805 Broughton Street
Victoria, BC V8W 1E5

RMTS Administration Office
#302 - 1005 Broad Street
Victoria, BC V8W 2A1

250.361.0800
Box Office: 250.386.6121

McPherson Playhouse
#3 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC V8W 1P5

www.rmts.bc.ca

Get social with us!

