

2024
Annual Report

Royal & McPherson Theatres Society

The People. The Place. The Experience.

VISION. Our community is enriched by sustainable theatres that bring people together to share in the wonder of performance experiences.

MISSION. We connect artist and audience, and provide professional stewardship of valued heritage theatres.



The Royal and McPherson Theatres Society respectfully acknowledges that the McPherson Playhouse and the Royal Theatre are located on the traditional territories of the Lekwungen peoples, now known as the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations.

The Royal and McPherson Theatres Society manages the Royal Theatre and McPherson Playhouse on behalf of the civic owners and residents of the region, with the goal of nurturing a lively cultural centre for our community and delivering top-notch theatrical experiences with professional excellence.

BOARD PRESIDENT REPORT

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the 2024 Royal and McPherson Theatres Society (RMTS) Annual Report. This past year has been one of transition, growth, and renewed commitment to our mission of bringing exceptional live performances to our community.

First and foremost, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to our dedicated funders, whose unwavering support ensures that we can continue to operate and maintain these treasured theatres. I extend sincere thanks to the City of Victoria, the District of Oak Bay, the District of Saanich, the Capital Regional District, and the many individual donors whose generosity sustains our efforts. Your investment in the performing arts is invaluable, and we are truly grateful for your continued partnership.

This year, we experienced a significant change in leadership. Following a staff transition midway through the year, Mandy Niddrie stepped in as Acting Executive Director, providing the steady hand and clear vision needed to guide our organization through this period of change. Mandy was instrumental in ensuring that the RMTS remained focused on our mission, supporting staff and operations with exceptional leadership. I am personally indebted to her for her dedication, and I know the entire Board is incredibly grateful for her efforts.

With change comes opportunity, and I am thrilled to officially welcome our new Executive Director, Jennifer Johnson. Since joining us in March, Jennifer has brought a wealth of industry knowledge, strategic vision, and enthusiasm to the RMTS. We look forward to seeing her leadership shape the future of our organization as we continue to build on our successes and strengthen our impact within the community.

I would also like to take a moment to acknowledge and thank our Board of Directors - those who have completed their terms, those who are continuing on, and those newly joining us. Your dedication, time, and insight are crucial to the governance and sustainability of the RMTS. It is through your collective efforts that we can continue to offer exceptional live entertainment experiences to our audiences.

This past year has reaffirmed the importance of live performance in our community. We have seen audiences return with excitement, artists take to our stages with renewed passion, and our staff work tirelessly to ensure each performance is a success. The commitment of everyone involved—our funders, staff, board members, artists, and audiences—has made this year a remarkable one.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to maintaining the highest standards of financial stewardship, operational excellence, and artistic programming. With Jennifer Johnson at the helm, the support of our incredible team, and the enthusiasm of our community, I have no doubt that the RMTS will continue to thrive.

Thank you to everyone who has played a role in supporting the RMTS this year. Your dedication and passion for the performing arts make all the difference.

Hazel Braithwaite, *Board President*



ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

2024 was a remarkable year of transition and achievement for the RMTS. With the departure of Executive Director Franz Lehrbass in July, I stepped into the role of Acting Executive Director until a new Executive Director was appointed.

The RMTS continued to provide a diverse range of arts and entertainment for our community, proudly supporting local non-profit and educational clients. 2024 was a busy and successful year for the Royal Theatre and McPherson Playhouse, with 234 performances and over 180,000 tickets sold.

Our dedicated staff focused on maintaining our historic theatres. Key projects included: Brick repointing at the Royal Theatre (Phase 1 completed) and McPherson Playhouse (starting this summer). ~ Emergency replacement of the main breaker at the Royal Theatre. ~ Replacement of stage monitors and loading area safety lighting upgrades at both theatres. ~ Assessment of concrete canopies and wireless microphone expansion at the McPherson Playhouse.

We also upgraded our box office ticketing system, Tessitura, adding significant new features and improvements.

Highlights of the year included: Amendment of Royal Theatre Bylaw #4560 approved by the Province of British Columbia and adopted by the CRD Board of Directors, ensuring appropriate capital funding. ~ Adoption of the Respectful Workplace Policy and Procedures by the RMTS Board, with training provided to staff and board members. ~ Participation in the Dylan Willows Celebration, a benefit concert for a local radio personality, where RMTS donated two nights of rent and staff contributed their time and money. ~ Welcoming new team members: Warren Busby as Technical Director, Gordon Heal as Assistant Technical Director, Kristen Iversen Front of House Manager, and the return of Jennifer Phillips and Tony LeMay to the administration team. ~ Recruitment of a new Executive Director: Jennifer Johnson, who started on March 3, 2025, and has been a wonderful addition to the team.



I am deeply grateful to the RMTS staff, board, and clients for their support during this transition. Special thanks to Hazel Braithwaite, Valla Tinney, and my colleagues for their guidance and support.

Mandy Niddrie, Acting Executive Director
(August 1, 2024, to February 28, 2025)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

As I step into the role of Executive Director for the Royal and McPherson Theatres Society I am struck by the vision and foresight of our civic leaders to preserve these iconic Canadian theatres. It is a rare gift for a community to have not one, but two active heritage performing arts venues, and it is a privilege to be entrusted with their care for future generations.

Learning about the organization and the communities we serve, it is impressive to see the RMTS's post-pandemic success. In 2018, our last full pre-pandemic season, the Royal Theatre and McPherson Playhouse hosted 104 and 55 performances respectively. In 2024, the Royal Theatre hosted 127 performances, and the McPherson Playhouse 107. This stands as a testament to the dedication of community arts organizations, the hard work of our staff, and the participation of audience members.

What inspires me most about the RMTS is our unwavering commitment to connection through our core values of, "the People, the Place, the Experience." In an age where digital interactions easily replace face-to-face encounters, the magic of shared human experience becomes even more precious. At the heart of our humanity lies the instinct to tell our stories, to express ourselves, and to gather in moments of discovery and joy. This is the essence of the RMTS mission and the invaluable role we play in our community. Our theatres are more than buildings; they are living, breathing spaces that resonate with the memories of countless experiences—first dates and anniversaries, recitals and celebrations of life. We are the home of theatre, music, and dance in all their glorious forms, supporting local talent and welcoming national touring productions.

Thank you to everyone for your gracious welcome. It is a true privilege to join the RMTS and serve Greater Victoria through the thoughtful, sustainable, and visionary guardianship of our people, these places, and your experiences.



Jennifer Johnson, Executive Director

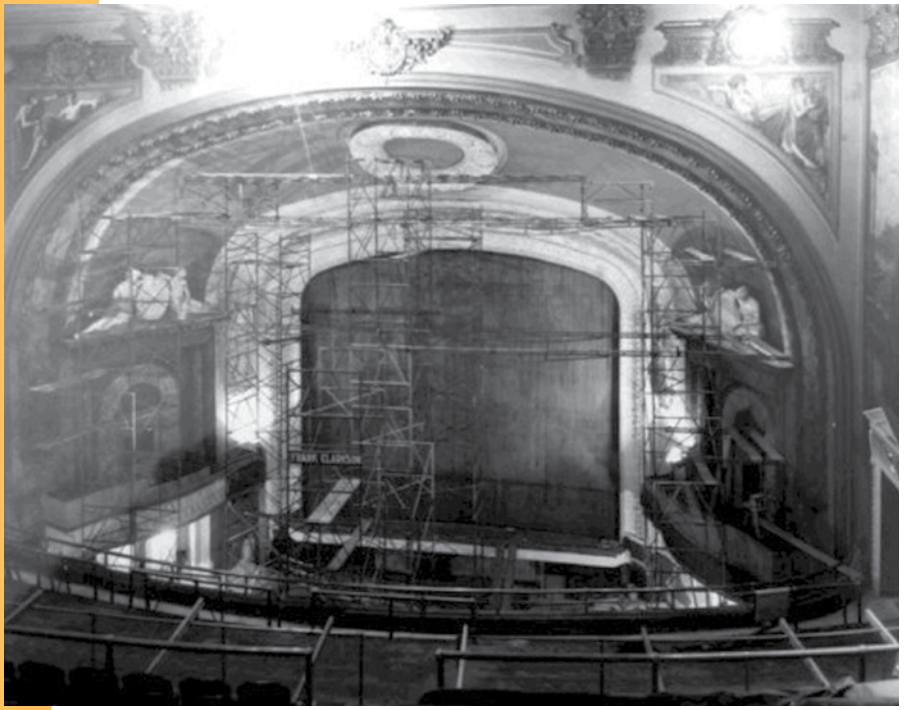
2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive Committee
Councillor Hazel Braithwaite, *President*
Valla Tinney, *Vice President*
Marley Gibbons, *Treasurer*
Heather Burns, *Secretary*
Christopher Devlin, *Past President*

Directors
Ian Alexander
Cathy Arber
David Bouchard
Lindalee Brougham
Tom Burley
Councillor Matt Dell
Aurora Faulkner-Killam
Marcus Handman
Yves Mayrand
Jenny McLeod
John Myers
Marilyn Palmer
Councillor Teale Phelps Bondaroff
Sarah Reid

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 is owned by the City of Victoria and receives funding from the City of Victoria.

The RMTS is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors consisting of three Municipal Councillors, three to seven Elected Directors and three to five CRD Appointed Directors. The Board works to maintain, preserve, and further develop the Royal Theatre and McPherson Playhouse by providing governance and management to the organization's resources.





DID YOU KNOW? *The Royal & McPherson Theatres Society, previously known as the McPherson Foundation, has been the steward of the Royal Theatre and McPherson Playhouse on behalf of their civic owners and the citizens of the region for over 46 years.*

OUR TEAM

Full-Time Staff Members

Karen Ainey, *Manager of Information and Digital Technologies*
Warren Busby, *Technical Director*
Derek Cooper, *Box Office and Marketing Coordinator*
Nancy Downer, *Finance Manager*
Sheelagh Drever, *Payroll & Human Resources*
Gordon Heal, *Assistant Technical Director*
Tom Heemskerk, *Assistant Technical Director*
Kristen Iversen, *Front of House Manager*
Brian Johnson, *Custodian*
Anthony Le May, *Accounting Analyst and Venue Settlements*
Franz Lehrbass, *Executive Director*
Darcy Lipsey, *Client Services and Digital Content*
Blair Morris, *Technical Director*
Mandy Niddrie, *Manager of Client Services & Acting Executive Director*
Melissa O'Shea, *Box Office Manager*
Daniel Pedlow, *Assistant Technical Director*
Jennifer Phillips, *Executive Assistant*
Christine Richardson, *Front of House Manager*
Cameron Stewart, *Assistant Technical Director*
Kathleen Stewart, *Custodian Supervisor*
Vincent Swales, *Custodian*
Bo Xu, *Accountant*



The RMTS is comprised of a team of experienced, knowledgeable, and dedicated arts professionals who manage all aspects of the Royal Theatre and McPherson Playhouse. Our staff take pride in cultivating a vibrant cultural hub for our community.

The RMTS works closely with the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees & Moving Picture Technicians, Artists and Allied Crafts (IATSE) Local 168, who represent all RMTS employees outside of the Administration Office.

In 2024, the RMTS employed 22 full-time professional staff members.
The management team is supported by a casual staff of over 200 people.

2024 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

VISION. Our community is enriched by sustainable theatres that bring people together to share in the wonder of performance experiences.

MISSION. We connect artist and audience, and provide professional stewardship of valued heritage theatres.

VALUES. The People. The Place. The Experience.

Priority 1:
Cohesive Team

Goal 1: We must prioritize people with a safe and supportive environment.

Goal 2: We must build trust to instill clarity, connection and confidence.

Priority 2:
Strong Community

Goal 3: We must proactively strengthen relationships to achieve mutual goals in the cultural life of our community.

Goal 4: We must engage with partners to further reconciliation, inclusion and accessibility.

Priority 3:
Effective Funding

Goal 5: We must develop a more sustainable, adaptable, diversified funding model.

Goal 6: We must work with partners to build a more compelling case for support.

Priority 4:
Flourishing Venues

Goal 7: We must strive to maintain and improve our heritage buildings to meet evolving needs, being conscious of environmental sustainability.

Goal 8: We must take the lead in planning and implementing major capital projects, and seeking all resources to fund them.

AT A GLANCE

210,350
tickets issued



234
total number of performances

140
total number of productions

$16,883
provided in community opportunity support



donated tickets to **30** community organizations



93
box office events outside of our venues



19,383
OnStage subscribers

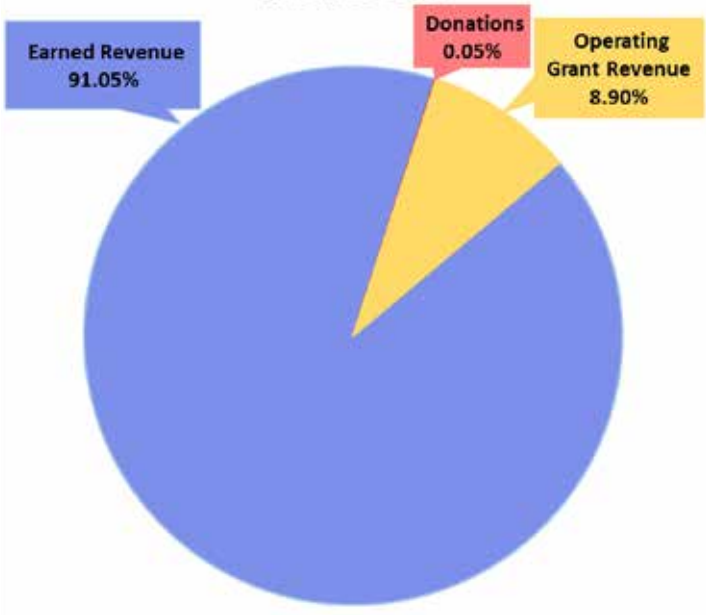


10,711
social media followers



676,885
unique website visitors

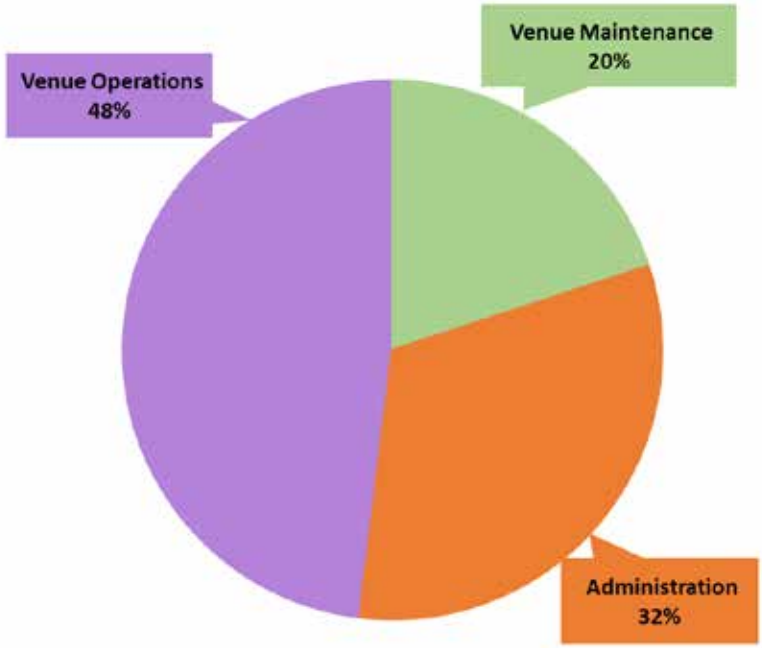
RMTS REVENUE 2024



Operating Grant Revenue for the Royal Theatre is **3.32%** and is supported by the *City of Victoria* and *Districts of Saanich* and *Oak Bay*.

Operating Grant Revenue for the McPherson Playhouse is **17.11%** and is supported by the *City of Victoria*.

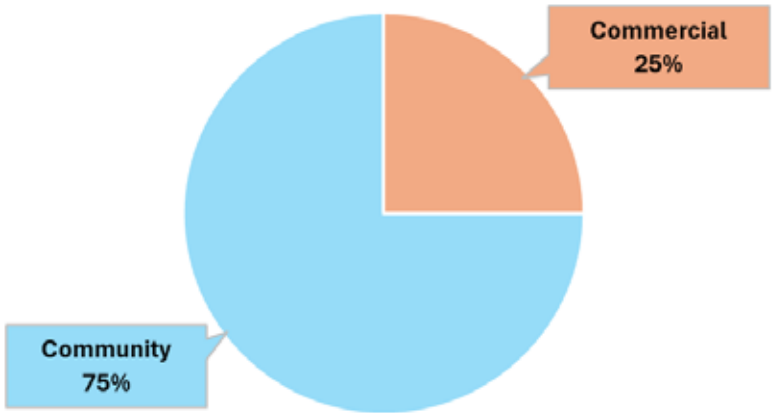
RMTS EXPENSES 2024



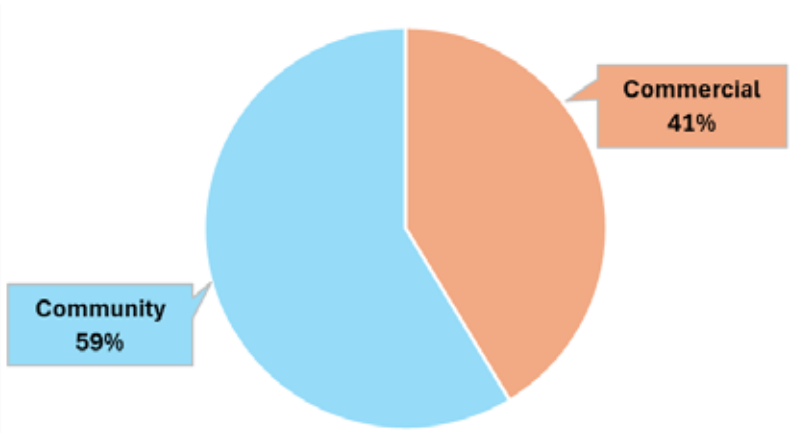
Administration Expenses include all resources required for both venues, ticketing services and the administrative office.

ROYAL THEATRE

2024 VENUE USE



2024 PERCENTAGE OF EARNED REVENUE



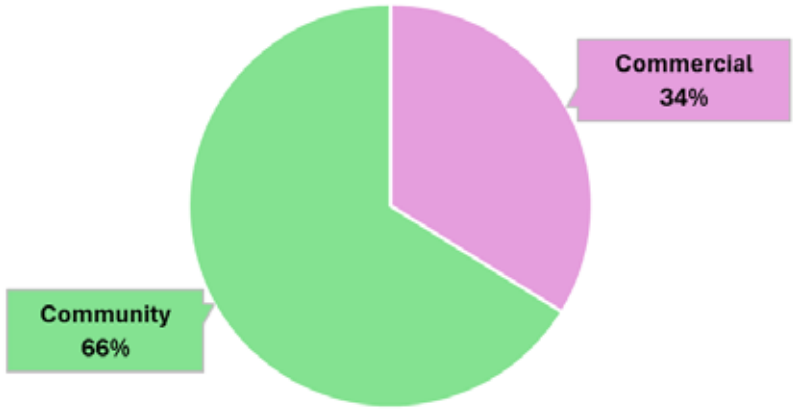
2024 at the *Royal Theatre:*

176 used days, **136,348 tickets** issued

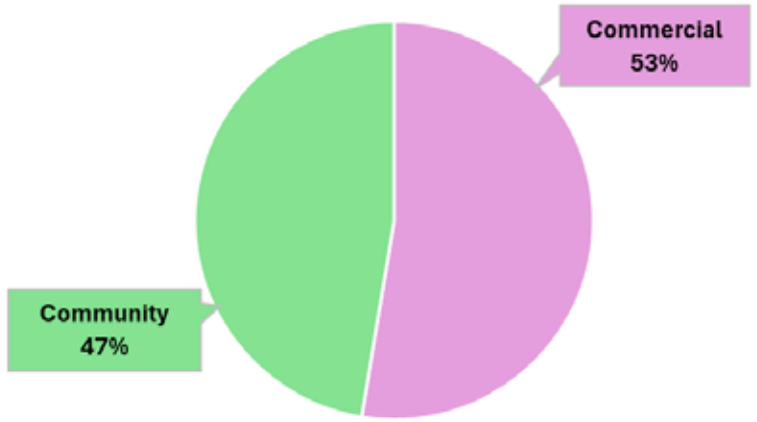
127 performances across **71 productions**.

McPHERSON PLAYHOUSE

2024 VENUE USE



2024 PERCENTAGE OF EARNED REVENUE

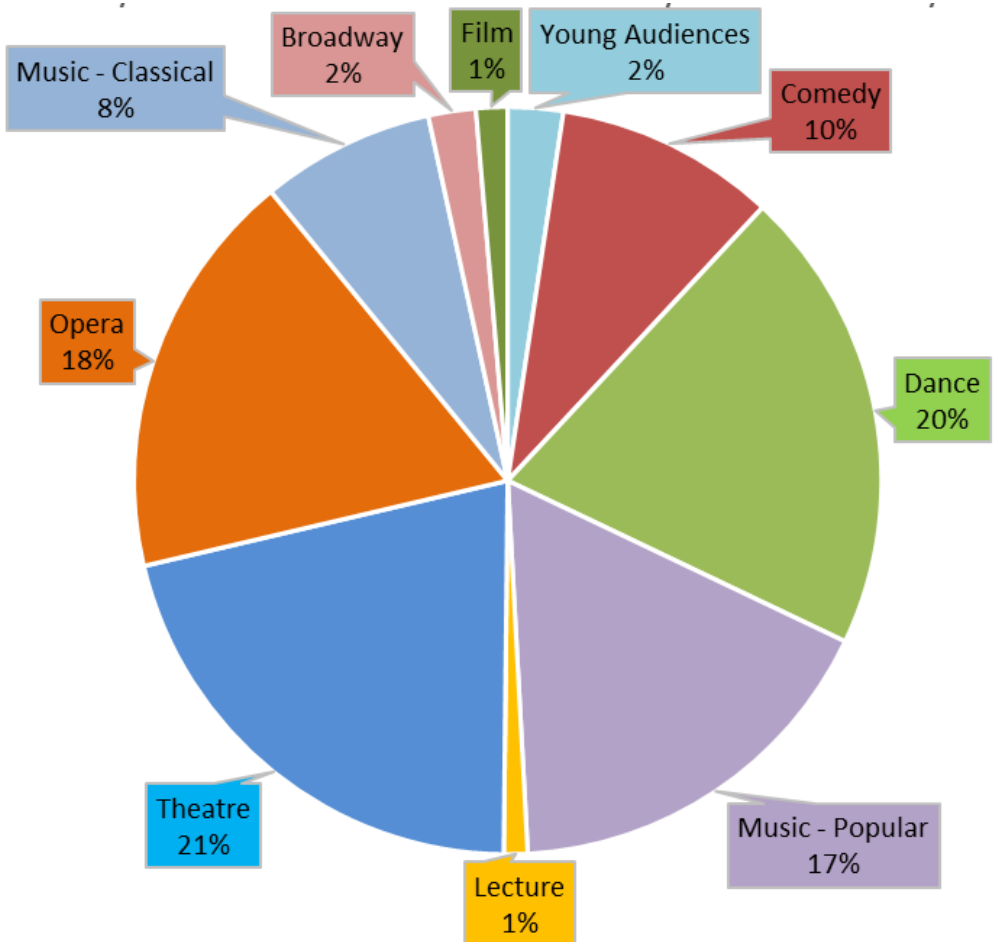


2024 at the *McPherson Playhouse:*

139 used days, **52,436 tickets** issued

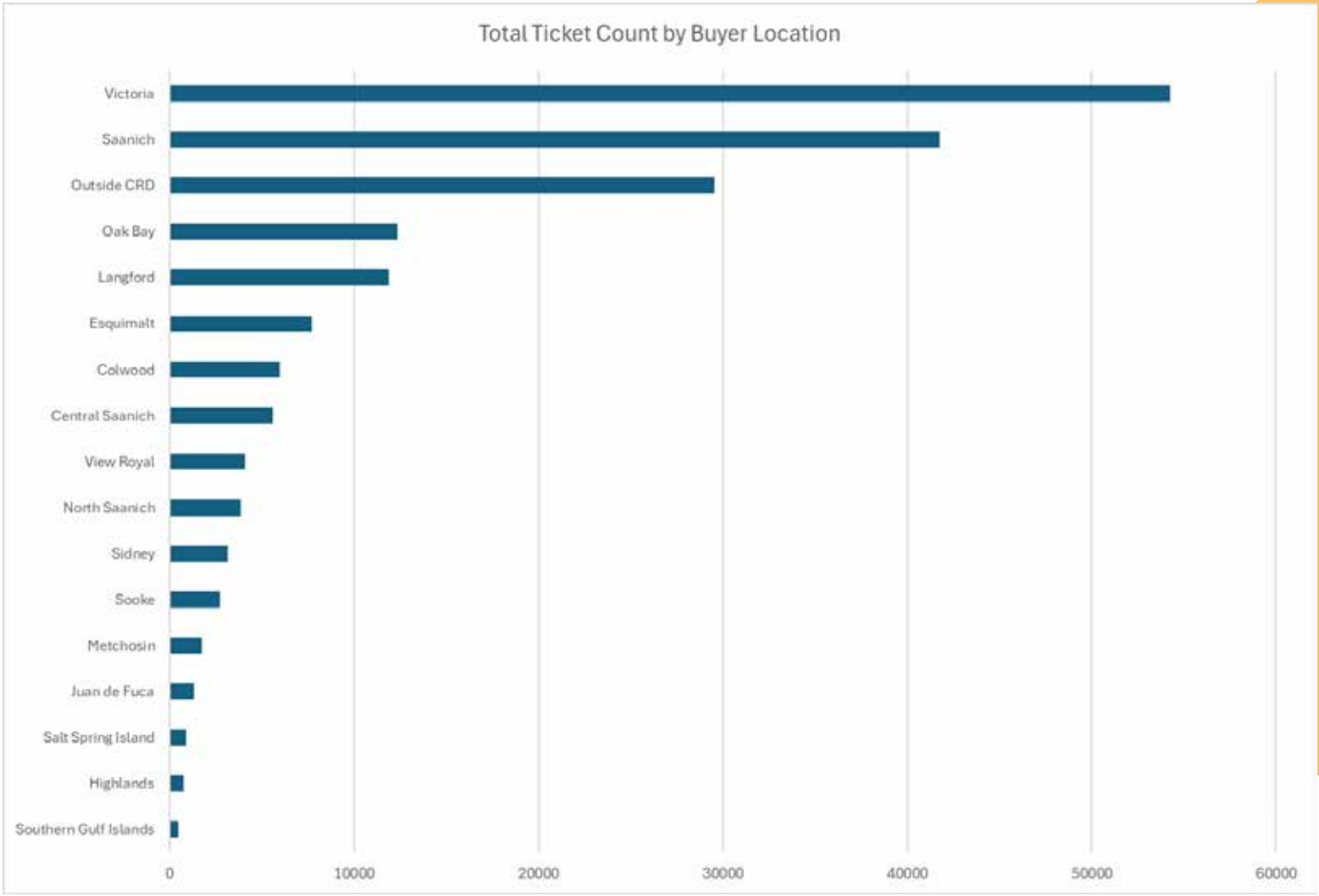
107 performances across **69 productions**.

GENRE DIVERSITY ON OUR STAGES



50% *of all productions at the McPherson Playhouse are* **Theatre**, *while* **Opera** *and* **Dance** *make up* **30%** *and* **28%** *(respectively) of all venue use at the Royal Theatre.*

ATTENDANCE BY MUNICIPALITY



DID YOU KNOW?

Over **15%** of tickets purchased come from **outside the CRD**.

CAPITAL AND VENUE MAINTENANCE PROJECTS 2024

Heritage Preservation
Royal Theatre: Led by the CRD, phase one of exterior brick re-pointing. A preservation and structural integrity project.
McPherson Playhouse: Led by the CRD, an engineering study on the exterior concrete canopies to determine structural integrity and scope of repairs.

Facility Maintenance
Royal Theatre: Led by the RMTS, the necessary replacement of the building's main breaker. An extraordinary emergency project to upgrade and modify aging compatibility with current electrical code. During this time the theatre was run off generators 24/7 for approximately 700 hours requiring weekly fuel deliveries and overnight security. The project is now complete, and the theatre is reconnected to the hydro grid with the new breaker fully operational.

Stage Technology Upgrades
Royal Theatre
- Installation of new safety lighting in the loading bay area.
- Installation of two moving light fixtures.
- Completion of stage monitor replacement.

McPherson Playhouse
- Installation of new safety lighting in the loading bay area.
- Addition of eight new microphones to support our local musical theatre groups.
- Initiation of project to upgrade the architectural detail lighting which will include replacement of existing tungsten-based house lighting fixtures with LED fixtures and addition of fixtures to improve patron safety in the balcony.
- Completion of stage monitor replacement and the completion of repair of aging speakers, including two new speakers in the front rows of audience seating and the repair of six existing speakers.
- Purchase of a new lens for the stage projector to increase usability across our client base.
- Installation of two moving light fixtures.





The RMTS gratefully acknowledges the capital fund contributions from the owners for capital expenditures.

Capital project funds allocated for the upkeep and enhancement of the Royal Theatre and McPherson Playhouse are restricted from being used for operational expenses. These funds are managed by the Capital Regional District. Additionally, the RMTS supports capital projects for the theatres by supplementing these funds with earned revenue.

TECHNOLOGY UPDATES 2024

Our ticketing software infrastructure had a major upgrade, the largest in a decade, that rolled out a wealth of new features, enhancements, and improvements to the user experience. This new version was developed with a digital first focus that aligns with our technology goals to continuously improve and innovate, which allows us to stay on the cutting-edge of technology.

Project Goals	**New Feature Alignment**
User Friendly Technology	New modernized user interface that is easier to learn and navigate
Accessibility	Improvements to our e-commerce solution, which comply with the Web Content Accessibility Standard 2.1 AA
Improve Productivity	New scanning software and hardware
Enhance Collaboration	Greater flexibility with communications that will help us welcome the widest possible audience
Facilitate Innovation	Introduction of Mobile Wallet Passes
Engagement Tools	Overhaul of the fundraising and membership functionality that facilitate better acquisition and retention





TICKETING SERVICES 2024

The RMTS Box Office offers specialized ticketing services to support a vibrant community. In addition to exclusively ticketing for the Royal Theatre and McPherson Playhouse we also offer ticketing services for venues around town. Our skilled staff approach each event flexibly and we reliably build, sell, and settle events of all sizes and genres.

Highlights include: ~ 319 events built for sale. ~ Utilized the flexibility of our ticketing software to collaborate with the Victoria Symphony and expand ticketing to include their events at the Farquhar at UVic. ~ Leveraged technology to manage high volume on sales and reduce resellers and bots. ~ Implemented layers of protection to reduce fraud and bad actors. ~ Collaborated with Victoria On Stage to ticket sensory friendly performances.

2024 SEASON AT A GLANCE: ROYAL THEATRE

71 Unique Productions – 127 Performances - 176 Use Days

A Drag Queen Christmas, A.I.M by Kyle Abraham, Ainadamar, Alexandra Streliski, Bahamas, Ballets Jazz Montreal, Beethoven Symphony No 5, Best of Broadway, Bianca Del Rio, Booker T Stax Revue, Canada's Best Karate, Chris D'Elia, Christmas Pops, Circa, Compagnie Herve Koubi, Daniel Lapp's 21st Anniversary, Dansko Studios, David Sedaris, Dracula, Dylan Willows Celebration, Elevate Dance Centre, Feist, Frankenstein, Glenn Miller Orchestra, High Valley, Home Alone in Concert, Hyprov, Jann Arden Christmas, Jesse Roper, Jesus Christ Superstar, Jim Witter: Rock n Roll to Me, Jimbo's Drag Circus, Jon and Roy Holiday Special, Kluxen & Chooi, Kluxen-Strauss' 4 Last Songs, La clemenza di Tito, La Nef-Sea Songs & Shanties, Laura Ramoso, Mark Normand, Marriage of Figaro, Matt Rife, Michael Jackson History Show, Mini Pop Kids, Murdoch Mysteries in Concert, New Year's Day Celebration, Nrityagram Dance Ensemble, Ocie Elliott, Parker-Beethoven's Emperor, Protege Dance Project, Queen - It's A Kinda of Magic, Raffi, Relive the Music, Rimsky-Korsakov-Scheherazade, Robert Schumann Finale, RWB Nutcracker, Salvation Army Toy Drive, Simon & Garfunkel Story, Snowed In Comedy Tour, Swan Lake, Take 6 & Morgan James, Taylor Mania, Tchaikovsky Symphony No 4, The Cult, The Gift of the Nutcracker, Tommy Tiernan, Victoria in Love, Whose Live Anyway?, Zakir Hussain Trio, Ziggy Alberts





DID YOU KNOW?

34,571 unique households visited the Royal Theatre in 2024.

Of those, **28%** were **first time** ticket purchasers at the Royal Theatre.

2024 SEASON AT A GLANCE: McPHERSON PLAYHOUSE





69 Unique Productions – 107 Performances - 139 Use Days

Abra Cadabra, Alan Doyle, American Rock Legends, Anne of Green Gables, Annie Jr., Barbara Hannigan, Bob the Drag Queen, Bowie Forever, Bruce McCulloch, Cat Kid Comic Club, CBC Massey Lectures, Chris Thile, Completely Creedence, Dance Unlimited Recital, Donovan Woods, Drew Lynch, Folsom Prison Revisited, Golden Girls, Holly Jolly Christmas, Hot Flash Comedy, Investors Group, It's Just Drag, Jann Arden & Rick Mercer, Jim Cuddy, Jump - Van Halen Experience, Knotted, Led Zepagain, Legends Show, Luca Fogale, Mary Poppins, Mary Poppins Sensory, Menopause the Musical, Michael Kaeshammer, Murray McLauchlan, Music of the Night, Nick Carter, Okareka Dance Company, Passion and Performance, Pinky Patel, Prince Again, Ria Mae, Ron James, Rumours Fleetwood Mac Tribute, Russell Howard, Sin City Illusions, SLS presents Grease, SMUS Sr Something Rotten, Steph Tolev, Sweeney Todd, Take it to the Limit, TEDx Victoria, The Comic Strippers, The Life of Tom Petty, The Wilds, Thunderstorm, Veronica Swift, Veselka Ukrainian Dancers, Victoria Academy of Ballet, Walk Right Back, William Prince, Wonderheads Christmas Carol, Yellow Brick Road Experience, Yellowpoint Christmas

DID YOU KNOW?

15,608 unique households visited the McPherson Playhouse in 2024.

Of those, **27%** were **first time** ticket purchasers at the McPherson Playhouse.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS & PRESENTERS

Ballet Victoria

BROADWAY IN VICTORIA

DANCE VICTORIA
THE WORLD'S BEST DANCE

OPERA
PACIFIC OPERA VICTORIA

VICTORIA SYMPHONY
Christian Kluxen, Music Director

BROKEN RHYTHMS

CANADIAN COLLEGE of PERFORMING ARTS

dansko studios

DANCE UNLIMITED

Elevate Dance Centre
TAKING DANCE TO THE NEXT LEVEL

INTREPID

PASSION & PERFORMANCE ARTS INC.

protégé
DANCE PROJECT

SHAWNIGAN LAKE SCHOOL

St. Michaels University School

VESELKA
UKRAINIAN DANCE ASSOCIATION

VICTORIA ACADEMY of BALLET

VICTORIA CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC

THE VICTORIA Jam Society

THE VILLAGE CHOIR

VOS
MUSICAL THEATRE
EST. 1945

WONDERHEADS

Community Living
VICTORIA

THE SALVATION ARMY

VICTORIA FOUNDATION

Proudly supporting local organizations, the RMTS facilitates and prioritizes the use of the Royal Theatre and McPherson Playhouse for the above non-profit and local organizations. Please use the logo links to learn more about each of these organizations and how they enrich the cultural life of the community.

FROM OUR COMMUNITY

"... [The RMTS] are an amazing bunch of professionals that have made the *Broadway In Victoria* brand a reputable one and one that has been warmly embraced by the community. Thank you!"
- **Henry Kolenko,** *Broadway In Victoria*

"Seeing the community we've all had a hand in building over the years all together in one place for those two nights was purely magical. It's not lost on us the incredible work and time that went in to pull an event like this together in such a short amount of time. Then to have both shows go off seamlessly... a true testament to you and the team assembled to pull it off."
- **Dylan Willows,** *Dylan Willows Celebration*

"... A quick thank you for last weekend. It was our first time promoting a show at the venue, and everyone - the artists, fans, and my team - couldn't have been happier."
- **Nick Middleton,** *Westwood Recordings*

"Thanks for everything! The event was amazing and your entire staff are great!"
- **Lindsay Nielsen,** *Chek Media*

THANK YOU FOR THE SUPPORT

The symbiotic relationship among theatres, clients, performers, and audiences underscores the significance of supporting local venues, thereby nurturing the interconnected network of arts, culture, and entertainment within the community. The RMTS expresses gratitude for the unwavering support extended by the community in 2024, enabling us to take care of these cherished heritage theatres for future generations.

We gratefully acknowledge the continued support from our municipal funding partners.
The Royal Theatre receives a $100,000 operating grant contributed by Oak Bay, Saanich and Victoria.
The McPherson Playhouse receives a $350,000 operating grant from the City of Victoria.

The Royal and McPherson Theatres Society extends our gratitude to the City of Victoria for providing a permissive tax exemption for the McPherson Playhouse.

Thank you to our hotel partner.

DoubleTree by Hilton™ Hotel & Suites Victoria

Thank you to the individual donors who support the ongoing legacy of our venues.

McPHERSON PLAYHOUSE
3 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC V8W 1P5

ROYAL THEATRE
805 Broughton Street
Victoria, BC V8W 1E5

ADMINISTRATION OFFICE
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Victoria, BC V8W 2A1

250.361.0800
Box Office: 250.386.6121



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