

Report to the Community

2022-23



Arts
Commons



Our belief
is that equitable access
to the arts is a human right.

Our responsibility
is to redefine a bold and adventurous
Calgary by championing and investing
in creativity.

Our mission
is to be an inspirational force where
artists, community, and organizations
celebrate cultural identities, experience
the full breadth of human emotions,
and ignite positive change.



Josh Cardinal performing as part of National Indigenous Peoples Day celebrations outside of Arts Commons on 8th Avenue. ©Winner Brave

Rediscovering Our Role

2022-23

Building on the successes of the previous season and the momentum of a community eager to return to live cultural events, Arts Commons continues our most important work of reconnecting with Calgary. We built on the foundations of our organization, setting new goal posts for arts education, facility use, artist development, and audience growth. We listened to what Calgarians had to say and explored new partnerships and ways of sharing arts and culture – and we can't wait to see what's next.



Cimafunk takes the party to the Jack Singer Concert Hall stage as part of the BD&P World Stage series. ©Kim Gordon



Students participating in the ConocoPhillips Hub for Inspired Learning program learn about marine biology by creating their own jellyfish. ©Kiani Evans



The Queen's Cartoonists make jazz fun and accessible for families in the Jack Singer Concert Hall. ©Mike Hopkins

Our family of resident companies:



Letter from the President and CEO

Dear friends,

As we look back on our season, I feel a great sense of pride for everything that we accomplished within the arts and culture community of Calgary. After the COVID-19 closure, we saw audiences return to our performances, but not in the numbers that we'd seen pre-pandemic. We discovered that the arts could not and should not return to pre-pandemic ways, both in how we program, and how we reach audiences. Within that scope, Arts Commons changed how we do business to welcome people back in new ways, abandoning old standbys that no longer seemed relevant as people chose to engage with the arts on their own terms. We saw this as an opportunity to explore new programmatic models, taking our work into the community centres and schools where people gather. We redefined our programming, and we did this by asking Calgary what it is that it wants in its performing arts centre.

We became curious. We asked questions. What sorts of cultural experiences are people looking for? How can we work with artists to guide what we do? How can we undergo a philosophical transformation to better serve our community? The results so far have been monumental.

In Arts Education we embarked on an ambitious new program based on the learnings of our Arts Education Benchmark Survey – Arts ReimaginED. This year-long program aims to address issues of accessibility of arts education for teachers and students, provide training and centralized communication for teaching artists, and establish a stronger value proposition for parents. This first Arts ReimaginED culminated in a week of free in-classroom workshops and an Arts Education Summit, the first of its kind of Alberta.

Through the TD Incubator program, we welcomed two new Fellows, Sargeant X Comrade, to lead the artistic vision. Their creative synergies inspired the TD Incubator cohort to flourish, leading to a memorable TD Amplify Cabaret series and fruitful, ongoing mentorship opportunities. In the RBC Emerging Visual Artists Program, community-driven collaborations brought vital conversations into our building through visual art, like *Colouring it Forward* and its exhibition *Indigenous Expressions of Truth & Reconciliation*.

With Arts Commons Presents, our first special presentation of the season was *Choir! Choir! Choir!*, a performance that flipped the typical concert on its head: the audience became the performers. It took my breath away to see the Jack Singer Concert Hall filled

with over a thousand voices singing from their seats in harmony. And to cap off the season, we had the pleasure of inviting local artist amplifier, 10 at 10, to curate a lineup of artists who make up Calgary's significant Hip-Hop scene, opening for Canadian Hip-Hop legend, Kardinal Offishall — outdoors — on Olympic Plaza for over a thousand Calgarians.

And finally, I am thrilled that we got to introduce our new Vice President of Programming, acclaimed creative industry thought leader, Sarah Garton Stanley, to the Arts Commons family. SGS is more than ready to tackle the big questions that will help guide the future of Arts Commons.

Our commitment to building on our foundations has been about reevaluating everything we know about how art is created and delivered, and about where, how and why culture and community intersect. This is essential work as we ready our shovels for the Arts Commons Transformation and Olympic Plaza Transformation projects. Our city, and everyone who lives here, are our key collaborators as we define the future of Calgary's performing arts centre. We can't wait to take the next step together.

ALEX

Alex Sarian
President and CEO



Vice President of Programming (SGS) Sarah Garton Stanley and President and CEO Alex Sarian at Arts Commons.
©Kiani Evans

Fostering an ecosystem for our resident companies to thrive

In the 560,000 square feet that make up Arts Commons, the audiences of six vibrant resident companies attract thousands of attendees each year to collectively experience the powerful moments that are only possible in the live performing arts.

Alberta Theatre Projects (ATP) produced five shows in the 2022-23 season, including three world premieres: the long-awaited *Cowgirl Up* (originally programmed in the spring of 2020 before the COVID-19 shutdown), the holiday production of *The Jungle Book*, and the Betty Mitchell Award-nominated *The F Word*, a Downstage production presented by ATP in association with Handsome Alice and Theatre Calgary. The company also produced the Governor General's Award-nominated play *Bombay Black* and the wildly entertaining *Teenage Dick* (produced in association with The Shakespeare Company and Hit & Myth Productions). Alberta Theatre Projects concluded its season with the exciting appointment of artistic director Haysam Kadri, long-time Calgary theatre innovator and former artistic director of the Shakespeare Company.

This season, the Calgary Philharmonic presented 77 concerts featuring 27 guest conductors, 70 guest artists and groups, and five new commissions. A record-breaking 63% of the audience were first-time attendees — a testament that Calgary Phil is committed to have something for everyone. A highlight of Calgary Phil's collaborative presentations included the world premiere of Laura Hawley's *I Rise* with Pink Flamingo, performed by the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus alongside murals by artists from the Black Lives Matter Mural Project. Calgary Phil welcomed over 5,000 students into the concert hall and presented the much-anticipated live performance of *Napi and the Rock*, produced in collaboration with Making Treaty 7 Cultural Society. In continued support of young musicians, the Calgary Youth Orchestra joined the Calgary Phil in a side-by-side performance, *New World / New Generation*, bringing over 100 musicians together on stage. The season marked the Chorus's 60th anniversary, offering an opportunity to reflect on the 120-voice ensemble's legacy with an anniversary concert,

Let Voices Resound, which featured the Chorus performing centre stage at the Jack Singer Concert Hall with Cantaré Children's Choir and special guest soloists. ▶



Cast members of *Cowgirl Up* at ATP. ©Benjamin Laird



The traditional Blackfoot story of *Napi and the Rock* performed by the Calgary Philharmonic in collaboration with Making Treaty 7. ©Benjamin Laird



Todd Houseman, Dylan Thomas-Bouchier, and Riki Entz in the acclaimed finale to Alberta Theatre Projects' season, *Teenage Dick*. ©Benjamin Laird



Calgary Philharmonic performing in the Jack Singer Concert Hall. ©Benjamin Laird





Yoshie Bancroft and Kevin Takahide Lee in Theatre Calgary's Betty Michell Award-winning production of *Forgiveness*. ©Moonrider Productions



Alejandro Escovado in *An Evening with Alejandro Escovado* presented by One Yellow Rabbit at the GRAND. ©OYR



Co-creators Keshia Cheesman and Bianca Miranda perform *The F Word* in the Martha Cohen Theatre. ©Katy Whitt



The cast of Theatre Calgary's Jimmy Buffett's *Escape from Margaritaville* heat up the Max Bell Theatre stage. ©Trudie Lee

as part of the podcast series *Climate Change and Other Small Talk*, which won in five categories at the Positive Change Podcast Awards including Fiction and Social Justice.

One Yellow Rabbit was full of pent-up energy raring to go as they embarked on a full slate of activities for the 2022-23 season. The Rabbits started in October by presenting CBC Radio host and award-winning actor Diane Flacks in the Big Secret Theatre with her darkly comedic solo performance *Guilt*. This tour-de-force was followed by the 37th High Performance Rodeo, which ran from January 16th to February 3rd in 12 venues inside and outside the walls of Arts Commons. With 24 individual shows, three late-night cabarets, three open workshops and outreach activities reaching roughly 10,000 people over the course of three weeks, it was a roaring return to the beloved long-standing festival. The spring saw One Yellow Rabbit produce an ensemble work, a musical called *Nightingale Alley*, and ended the year with a week-long presentation from their Beautiful Young Artists program — *She Sat Down and Wept*.

Theatre Calgary's 2022-23 season marked the return to its first full six-show season on the Max Bell Theatre stage since 2020, providing opportunities to more than 200 performers, creative artists, and members of stage crews. The season was highlighted by Theatre Calgary and the Arts Club Theatre Company's

award-winning world premiere of Mark Sakamoto's *Forgiveness*, which won three Betty Mitchell Awards including Outstanding Production of a Play. Oscar Wilde's classic comedy, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, also brought in two Betty Mitchell Awards, while the Calgary's Choice hit musical *Jimmy Buffett's Escape to Margaritaville* was a joyous conclusion to the season. Theatre Calgary also continued its long-time emerging artist Shakespeare by the Bow program as it once again went on the road as Shakespeare on the Go to numerous communities in Calgary and surrounding areas.

Arts Commons Presents embarked on an ambitious performance lineup highlighted in the signature series of BD&P World Stage, Classic Albums Live, Jazz, National Geographic Live, and PCL Blues. Learn more on page 18.

In a groundbreaking 19th season, Downstage audiences experienced performances that were funny, brave, and ripe for conversation. Downstage presented a Tiny Bear Jaws Production of the fast-paced, provocatively queer sketch show *Gender? I Hardly Know Them*, co-created and performed by Elena Belyea and Sydney Campbell. Then came the massive success of the world premiere of *The F Word*, co-created and performed by Keshia Cheesman and Bianca Miranda, lighting up The Martha Cohen Theatre with a thoughtful and joy-infused celebration of — to quote the creators — fatness, in collaboration with Alberta Theatre Projects and Theatre Calgary. Finally, Downstage produced a wildly playful inaugural Stage It Festival which featured two new plays by emerging artists along with a bevy of music, drag, and improv performances. Tara Beagan's *Ride or Die* was produced by Downstage

Arts Commons is more than a space, it's a hub for culture

With the expertise of the Arts Commons production, facilities, event services and ticketing teams, Arts Commons is a well-oiled machine that ensures every step from the initial booking of the venue to the final clean-up after the show goes according to plan.

In the 2022-23 season, our teams sought out new partnerships with different members of the community to gain input and guidance in our efforts of diversifying the offering on our stages to better reflect the cultural face of Calgary. We also conducted proof of concept work in the current building, testing and validating the technological improvements that will allow for greater accessibility to live performance experiences in the new facilities that will be realized through the Arts Commons Transformation (ACT) project.

In one of our busiest years ever for venue bookings, Arts Commons maximized utilization of our venues and expanded our portfolio of clients by securing corporate, expo-partners, graduation, and townhall events.

An example of our expanded scope of events was the LaFontaine-Baldwin Lecture, which focused on helping Canadians re-evaluate the past, present and future of how Canada's first peoples and those of us who arrived more recently can forge a positive path forward. The event featured Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary Simon. It is a strong confirmation of our values that prestigious events like this choose Arts Commons to partner with.

Another event that confirmed Arts Commons is on the right path of attracting a greater diversity of clients from all of Calgary's

communities was our first-time hosting of the *Celebration for the Arts | Hosted by Mayor Gondek*. Previous Mayors' events took the form of a sit-down luncheon, but Mayor Gondek was in search of a new format that better aligned with her idea of how the arts should be celebrated. Moving to the Jack Singer Concert Hall provided an elevated backdrop to one of the arts community's most beloved events and the revelry spilled out into the lobby with a dance party that rocked the house.

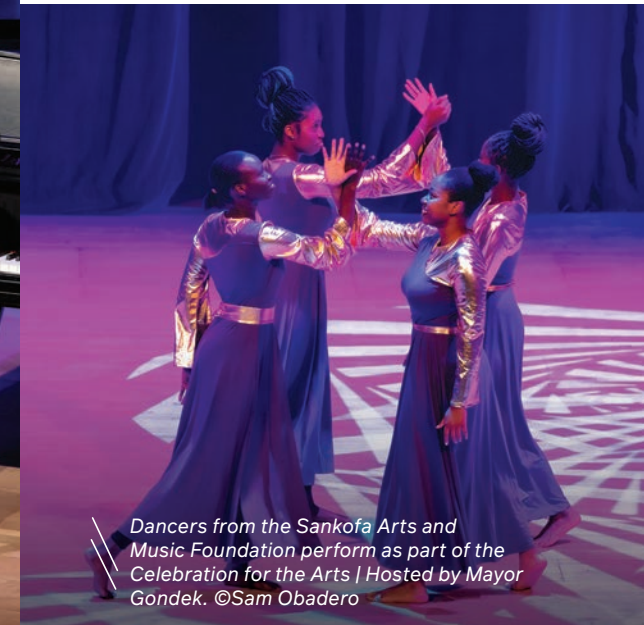
Arts Commons was proud to be Venue Partner and After-Party Sponsor for this magical event that put the arts, artists, and arts administrators in the spotlight. Due to its success, the *Celebration for the Arts | Hosted by Mayor Gondek* has reserved dates for two additional years in the Jack Singer Concert Hall. ▶

1,183

Events hosted by Arts Commons Event Services



The Super Choir led by John Morgan performs as part of the *Celebration for the Arts | Hosted by Mayor Gondek*. ©Sam Obadero



Dancers from the Sankofa Arts and Music Foundation perform as part of the *Celebration for the Arts | Hosted by Mayor Gondek*. ©Sam Obadero



The LaFontaine-Baldwin Lecture with Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary Simon. ©Kelly Hofer

“Events like this are only exceptional thanks to exceptional execution of every detail, and I cannot speak more highly of you and your whole team. You were at the heart of making this Lecture a success.”

Organizer, LaFontaine-Baldwin Lecture

“All of us at the Alberta Children’s Hospital Foundation and John Cameron Changing Lives Foundation value the relationships we’ve built with the staff at Arts Commons and appreciate the hard work from everyone there that goes into helping us execute a successful fundraising event.”

Organizer, Alberta Children’s Hospital Foundation

Keeping our eyes on the future, key systems within both the Martha Cohen and Max Bell Theatres required replacement. In the Martha Cohen Theatre, this included replacing the dimmer system with new racks, modules, and fixtures. The Max Bell Theatre received a redesigned speaker system including a new centre cluster, left and right arrays, near field coverage, and surround systems. The electrical infrastructure was upgraded to support these new systems. This work was supported by The City of Calgary Civic Partners Infrastructure Grant Program.

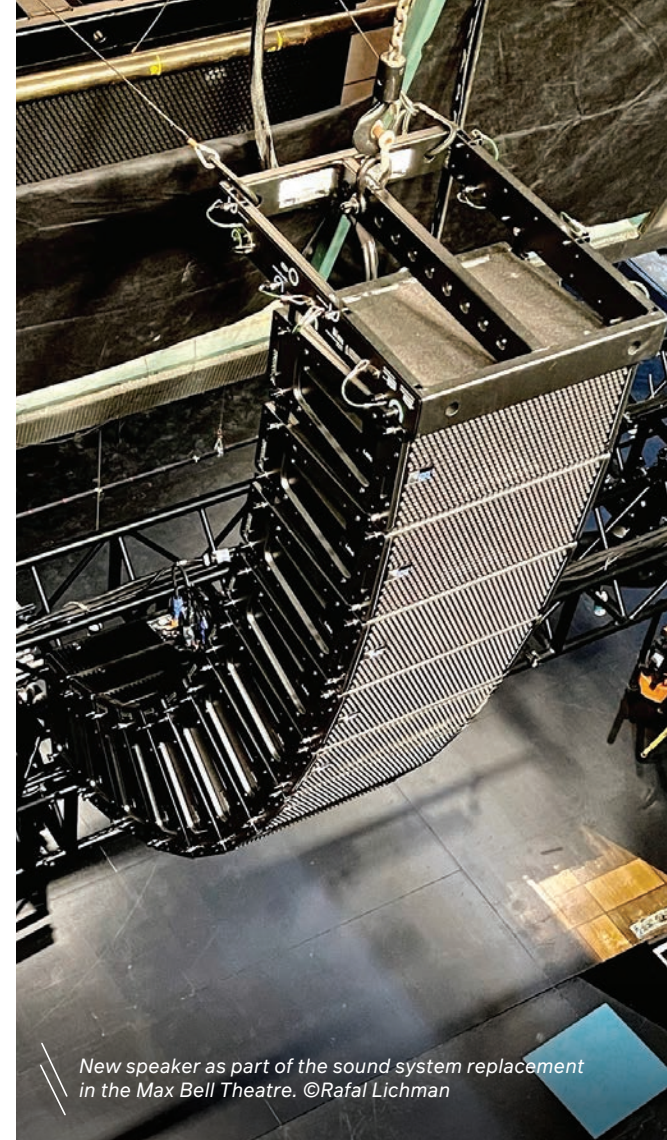
this technology can also be extended to the galleries and public spaces of the building, further removing both perceived and physical barriers. Along with improving our current building, this technology will be applied to the new Arts Commons facilities as part of ACT.

roasters. In addition, Canadian company North Water was chosen to supply reusable aluminum water bottles, allowing Arts Commons to step away from plastic bottles and towards greener alternatives.

MobileConnect+ Assisted Listening Device system will make all events at Arts Commons accessible to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community as well as to the Blind community by enabling audio description.

Proof of concept work took place in the Jack Singer Concert Hall Lobby, testing and refining the Sennheiser MobileConnect+ Assisted Listening Device system and we are now ready to implement this technology throughout the building. This will make all events at Arts Commons accessible to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community as well as to the Blind community by enabling audio description. Not restricted to venues,

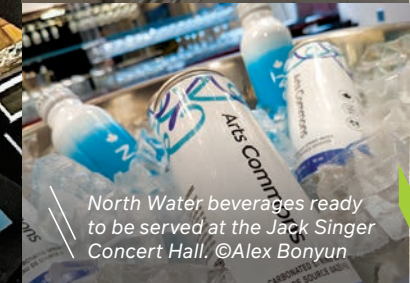
Another project to improve patron experience as well as discover new efficiencies was the shift to a shared service model for some of the bars in Arts Commons venues. By offering bar operations support, we’ve leveraged economies of scale to reduce costs and streamline processes. This has also supported our ongoing efforts to bring local providers into our bars, working with new Calgary-based breweries, distilleries and coffee



New speaker as part of the sound system replacement in the Max Bell Theatre. ©Rafal Lichman



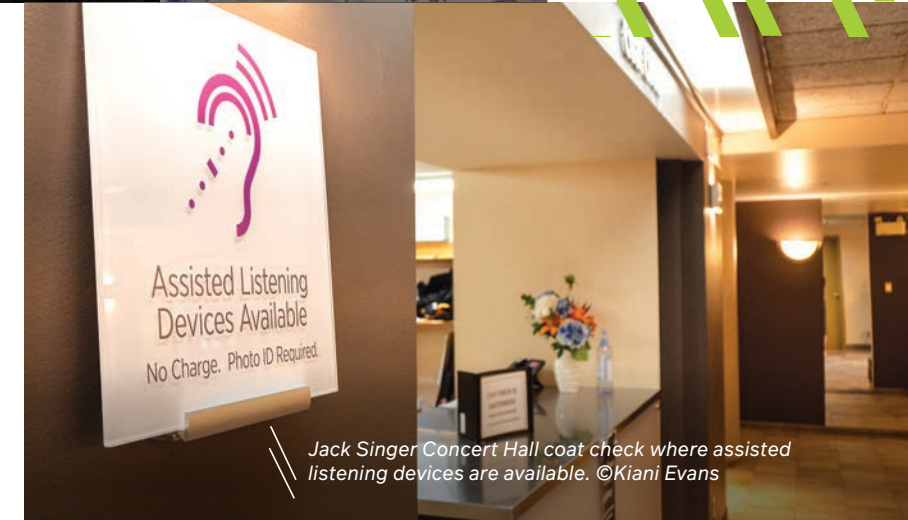
Electrical panel in the backstage of the Martha Cohen Theatre. ©Rafal Lichman



North Water beverages ready to be served at the Jack Singer Concert Hall. ©Alex Bonyun

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Organizations made use of Arts Commons’ facilities



Jack Singer Concert Hall coat check where assisted listening devices are available. ©Kiani Evans

Through community partnerships, Arts Commons embraces all of Calgary



Tony Tootoosis performing as part of National Indigenous Peoples Day celebrations outside of Arts Commons on 8th Avenue. ©Winner Brave

Using our facilities to elevate the work of our community partners has never been more critical. These efforts bring together communities, increasing dialogue and cultural sharing that make our entire Calgary community richer. It also allows us to learn and grow while offering our own expertise to assist in making their events the best that they can be.

On June 21st, Arts Commons partnered with Four Winds Indigenous Showcase and Market, co-founded by Tony Tootoosis, to curate music and performances from some of the many Indigenous communities in Treaty 7 territory in celebration of National Indigenous Peoples Day. It offered a low barrier entry point to anyone who is open to experiencing the cultural touchstone of a powwow. The event nearly doubled the previous year's attendance with over 300 people gathering outside of Arts Commons in both rain and sunshine.

Arts Commons and Casa Mexico have been collaborating since 2017 when Arts Commons hosted the first Día de Muertos, Day of the Dead Festival in the Jack Singer Concert Hall Lobby. Since that initial collaboration, the event has grown exponentially in scope and attendance, offering learning opportunities for both organizations to build on each year. Casa Mexico's goal of creating space for artistic expression within

the city dovetails elegantly with Arts Commons' goal to support the diverse communities of Calgary. This partnership with Casa Mexico allows Arts Commons to exchange our expertise in production in an opportunity that allows both of our organizations to grow.

In a partnership with Teatro Ristorante, Arts Commons hosted the inaugural Raccolto Gala, a fundraising event for arts education at Arts Commons including the National Geographic Live student presentation series, the newly launched education program, Arts ReimaginED, and the ConocoPhillips Hub for Inspired Learning. This sold-out event generated \$302,000.

Over the holiday season, the brand and audience development team along with the programming team, initiated a new partnership with Cadillac-Fairview, bringing ArtsXpeditions to brighten those last shopping days before Christmas. With live performances from Calgary-based musicians Zenon and Natalia Chai at Chinook Centre, it was a wonderful way to continue to engage local artists to perform in diverse spaces across Calgary. ▶



Mictlán at Día de Muertos, Day of the Dead Festival in the Jack Singer Concert Hall Lobby. ©Lucia Juliao



Natalia Chai lightens the holiday shopping mood as she performs at Chinook Centre. ©Antonia MacConnell



Mia Berloni, President & CEO of Teatro Group, speaks to guests at the Raccolto Gala at Teatro Ristorante. ©Dongbu





The cast of Step Afrika!: Drumfolk share dance and storytelling in the Jack Singer Concert Hall. ©Kim Gordon

Splash'N Boots entertain families at Calgary's winter festival, Chinook Blast, on Olympic Plaza. ©Kiani Evans



"I want to thank you and your incredible team for the execution and professionalism every step of the way throughout the Party in the Plaza activities! On point, inclusive and big swings from the jump made for the best product possible for the city to enjoy... Was an honour to work together and appreciate you for reaching out in the very first place to approach giving a nod to Hip-Hop 50 this summer in such a bold way."

Beni Johnson, 10 at 10



Sinzere opens the evening as part of the 10 at 10 Hip-Hop showcase at Party in the Plaza. ©Mike Tan

Kardinal Offishall performs to a rapt audience at Party in the Plaza. ©Mike Tan

Illuminating the darker months with a mid-winter festival of arts, culture, and sport, Calgary came together for Chinook Blast. Though Arts Commons' involvement in Chinook Blast is not new, 2023 saw Arts Commons Presents take over Olympic Plaza with a full slate of ArtsXpeditions musicians on Saturday, February 4th in a more fulsome partnership with the City of Calgary than previous years. Starting with families skating to the music of Bubba B the MC and Splash'N Boots and ending with an evening concert featuring Tendavillage, Tanika Charles, and Low Down Brass Band this was a fabulous showcase of local talent that wouldn't have been possible without the partnership of the City of Calgary.

Working in one-on-one consultation with the exceptional Wunmi Idowu and Woezo Africa Music and Dance Inc., Arts Commons hosted a masterclass with the company dancers and community participants in connection with Arts Commons

Presents' performance of Step Afrika!: Drumfolk. This included an in-depth article written by Wunmi around the roots and cultural significance of the dance styles which was circulated to the nearly 60,000 subscribers of our Spotlight e-newsletter. To bring the collaboration to a close, the company dancers and community participants were invited to attend the show.

When the warm months returned, ArtsXpeditions once again brought musicians and arts education activities to outdoor spaces near and far. By working with Calgary's YMCAs and the Calgary Stampede Caravan Committee, ArtsXpeditions popped up at Stampede Breakfasts, bringing music, make-and-take crafts, and fun to this beloved Calgary tradition.

These outdoor cultural experiences culminated in Party in the Plaza featuring Kardinal Offishall and Kiesza. The evening opened with a showcase of ten local Hip-Hop artists,

transforming the evening into a tribute to all things Hip-Hop, both within our local community and Canada as a whole. Party in the Plaza wouldn't have been possible without the support of The City of Calgary, Government of Alberta – Community Initiatives Program, Calgary Foundation, and the Calgary Downtown Association.



Walking the Path of Truth and Reconciliation

In 2021, Arts Commons began our journey towards Reconciliation, becoming more familiar with Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing, under the guidance of Dr. Reg and Elder Rose Crowshoe, respected Elders from the Piikani Nation. The Crowshoes introduced our team to the principles of Making Relatives, Ethical Space, and Sanctified Kindness, which ultimately became the cultural framework of our Reconciliation Strategy.

In 2022, building on our foundational knowledge and principles, Arts Commons hired Indigenous consultants Mahegun Tails Inc., who established an Indigenous Advisory Council (IAC) made up of representatives from each Treaty 7 nation, to ensure the work was supported by leaders of these communities, including lead Elder Jackie Bromley from the Kainai Nation.

Approximately 25 recommendations were provided, and a structure was defined for executing the recommendations based on the teachings of Senator Murray Sinclair, former Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. All work was done in Ethical Space, ensuring both Western and Indigenous ways were represented, with neither one being above the other.

From these broad strokes, five key steps were identified and agreed upon.



In our existing facility, and in the new facilities that will be realized through the ACT project, we aim to put our learning into action, creating spaces where: we bring people together around a shared commitment to Sanctified Kindness, or respect for all existence; Making Relatives with one another is done in a way that transcends notions of allyships and partnerships; and Ethical Space is not only created on the stage, but—more importantly—embodied in the work we do behind the scenes.

Arts Commons leadership, including the Board of Directors, have made the initial commitment to move forward towards Reconciliation, recognizing that Building Awareness of the Past must happen in tandem and must be ongoing, for Leadership Commitment to be sustainable.

Arts Commons has, to date, focused on informal training and cultural immersion opportunities, which have been eye-opening and transformative. This includes our support of the Elders Story Project which takes direction from the Elders to assist in their healing process through storytelling and ceremony.

Over the next season, formal training is planned and we will continue workshoping the recommendations to determine how we will integrate these into our day-to-day operations.



L-R: Elders Rose Crowshoe, Reg Crowshoe, John Chief Moon Sr., Darryl Bass, and Clarence Wolfleg participate in the Elders Story Project in a closed ceremony in the Jack Singer Concert Hall. ©Kiani Evans



Inspiring wonder, joy, and excitement on Calgary's stages

Arts Commons Presents inspires thousands of Calgarians each year to gather for powerful and energizing cultural experiences that run the gamut of music, dance, spoken word, performance art, circus, storytelling, and sometimes even sing-a-longs.

The fall of 2022 welcomed patrons back to Arts Commons Presents with *Choir! Choir! Choir!*, a completely unique live performance experience that recast the audience as the stars, turning the auditorium and all of the seats into a stage. Over a thousand voices filled the Jack Singer Concert Hall singing the familiar lyrics of "Mamma Mia" and "The Winner Takes It All" as cellphone lights illuminated the darkness.

In celebration of Calgary's love affair with the blues, the PCL Blues series recognized its 25th anniversary, opening with Judith Hill in the Martha Cohen Theatre — the first time the series had been presented in the larger venue. The season closed off with a sold-out performance of everyone's favourite viral slide guitarist, Jack Broadbent.

The BD&P World Stage series took audiences on incredible journeys, starting the season with YAMATO — The Drummers of Japan: *Hinotori*. Programmed during the COVID-19 pandemic, it was welcomed with a sold-out crowd and an enthusiastic

standing ovation. After the show, the Consul-General of Japan in Calgary, Takahiko Watabe, came on stage to meet the cast and congratulate them on their fabulous performance.

The Jazz series welcomed jazz, blues, R&B, and soul lovers from across Calgary when the legendary music-

eager to return with an unprecedented subscriber renewal rate along with new subscriptions to meet our highest goal ever set for the series. Special thanks to the Government of Canada through Canadian Heritage and Alberta Foundation for the arts for their support of these Arts Commons Presents series.

51,108

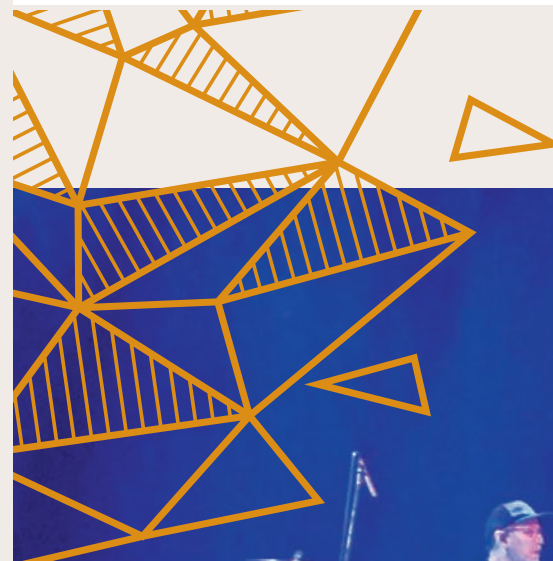
Attendees to Arts Commons Presents ticketed and non-ticketed events

maker and frontman of Booker T. & the M.G.'s, Booker T. Jones, came to the Jack Singer Concert Hall with *Booker T: A Stax Revue*. By the halfway point, many audience members had abandoned their seats to dance along, calling it "The best Jazz show ever."

Classic Albums Live returned for a stellar lineup honouring music history through respectful recreations of beloved albums live on stage at the Jack Singer Concert Hall. The final performance of the season, *Pink Floyd: The Dark Side of the Moon 50th Anniversary*, was the best attended Classic Albums Live performance since before the COVID-19 pandemic. Fans of Classic Albums Live were



Judith Hill performs in the Martha Cohen Theatre. ©Kim Gordon



Classic Albums Live performs Billy Joel: *The Stranger* in the Jack Singer Concert Hall. ©Kiani Evans

"The Jack Singer has the best acoustics in Calgary, hands down. I can't imagine seeing a legend like Booker T. anywhere else!"

Patron, Booker T: A Stax Revue



The legendary music maker Booker T. Jones performs in Booker T: A Stax Revue. ©Grey Hills Studio



YAMATO: The Drummers of Japan bring the house down with a sold-out performance of Hinotori in the Jack Singer Concert Hall. ©Will Young



Patrons interact with whimsical puppets in the Jack Singer Concert Hall lobby prior to Diva Amon: From Shallows to Seafloor from National Geographic Live. ©Will Young



Patrons in the Jack Singer Concert Hall lobby prior to Choir Choir Choir. ©Sam Obadero



Jack Broadbent performs at a packed Engineered Air Theatre. ©Sam Obadero



Raj Rangayyan and Sujeev Choha perform on the Duet Stage prior to the BD&P World Stage concert Strings for Peace. ©Kim Gordon



The wildly popular National Geographic Live series welcomed thousands of patrons to the Jack Singer Concert Hall to ignite their passion for science, conservation, exploration, and the natural world. Widely acclaimed photographer and National Geographic Explorer Ami Vitale shared her poignant experience of documenting the last male northern white rhino, Sudan, as well as the heroic efforts of Kenya's OI Pejeta Conservancy to save the species. Powerful stories like Sudan's have immeasurable power in inspiring future change. National Geographic Live also hosted our pilot ASL interpretation program. Its success has resulted in an expansion to all National Geographic Live presentations in the upcoming 2023-24 season offering live ASL interpretation on stage. We want to express appreciation to all of our National Geographic Live sponsors, including our presenting sponsor, ConocoPhillips Canada.

Arts Commons Presents expanded on our commitment to providing family-focused programming by presenting the ground-breaking *Leonardo! A Wonderful Story About a Terrible Monster*, an adaptation of Mo Willems' classic books from Manual Cinema. The multimedia performance integrated vintage overhead projectors, multiple screens, puppets, actors, and live feed cameras interwoven to mind-bending effect and was enthusiastically received by Calgary audiences with four sold-out performances.

The 2022-23 season of Arts Commons Presents ended with a free celebration under the open sky with *Party in the Plaza* featuring Kiesza and Kardinal Offishall. Over a thousand people of all ages from Calgary and beyond flocked to Olympic Plaza enjoy the food trucks, dance on the plaza, and soak up the vibe of the wonderful evening outdoors. It was a celebratory send-off to a summer of concerts, festivals, and cultural activations, resulting in a record-setting amount of media coverage from all major outlets.

As we look forward to the 2023-24 season, we were thrilled to announce the appointment of the new Vice President of Programming, Sarah Garton Stanley (SGS), who will join the team in September 2023. We welcome her into her new role where she will support Arts Commons on the

path of expanding its role as a place that reflects Calgary's diversity and energy. Coming to Calgary from the East Coast, she brings a wealth of experience as a creative innovator and industry leader.

“It made me feel inspired to be an Albertan and Calgarian.”

Patron, Party in the Plaza



National Geographic Explorer Ami Vitale introduces herself to a Jack Singer Concert Hall full of students. ©Kiani Evans



Calgary-born pop star Kiesza gets Olympic Plaza dancing at Party in the Plaza. ©Mike Tan



Leonardo! A Wonderful Story About a Terrible Monster enchants audiences in the Engineered Air Theatre. ©Alex Bonyun



Tarik Robinson from *Dragon Fli Empire* opens the evening as part of the 10 at 10 Hip-Hop showcase at Party in the Plaza. ©Mike Tan

“Thank you for doing this event and bringing many people to a world-class event that links emerging artists with established artists and connects Calgarians to the world of Hip-Hop and House music.”

Patron, Party in the Plaza





Uniting the power of arts and education in the classroom, studio, and on stage

Starting the 2022-23 season of arts education on a high note, 234 students filled the Jack Singer Concert Hall Lobby, Arts Learning Centre, the Hub, Jack Singer Rehearsal Hall, Motel Theatre, the Max Bell Theatre Lobby, and the Arts Commons Boardroom to experience everything from stage combat with Haysam Kadri to planet creation with teaching artist Paula Timm. It was part of Alberta Culture Days and marked the first time that the education departments of the resident companies of Arts Commons had collaborated on a single large event. One of those classes, from Notre

Dame High School, was part of a pilot project that brought diverse learners who have complex, cognitive and emotional and behavioural needs into the building for hands-on, integrated arts experiences. This became the

knowledge of the blues. By the end of the session, he had every student playing tunes on their very own harmonicas gifted to them by Arts Commons.

13,190

Students and teachers engaged through Arts Commons Education

launching point for another class of diverse learners with complex and special needs to join us from Christine Meikle School, and is now informing the way that we look at arts education accessibility. When Arts Commons says arts education is for everyone, we don't just mean all ages, we also mean all abilities and learning styles.

In the months following Alberta Culture Days, thousands of students attended Arts Commons Presents' National Geographic Live series and discovered a new way to look at art from touring performing artists. One of these artists, Kevin Burt from the PCL Blues series, sat down with a class of students to share his vast

In a very different type of music genre exploration, *Strings for Peace* introduced students to a harmonious conversation between North American classical guitar and North Indian classical sarod played by world-famous masters in each field: Maestro Amjad Ali Khan and Juilliard School guitar department founder Sharon Isbin. Students swayed to the hypnotic melodies and were able to voice their questions in a once-in-a-lifetime chance to connect with musicians renowned for their legacy with their chosen artform. ▶



Teaching artist Paula Timm guides students through creating their own planets as part of Culture Days. ©Sam Obadero

“All the artists were fantastic with our students. Our students are ES1 and ES2 students with various developmental and physical disabilities. The stage fighting was the highlight of our day. Our students connected with [the instructor] and he had them all engaged and laughing for the full hour. Thank you!”

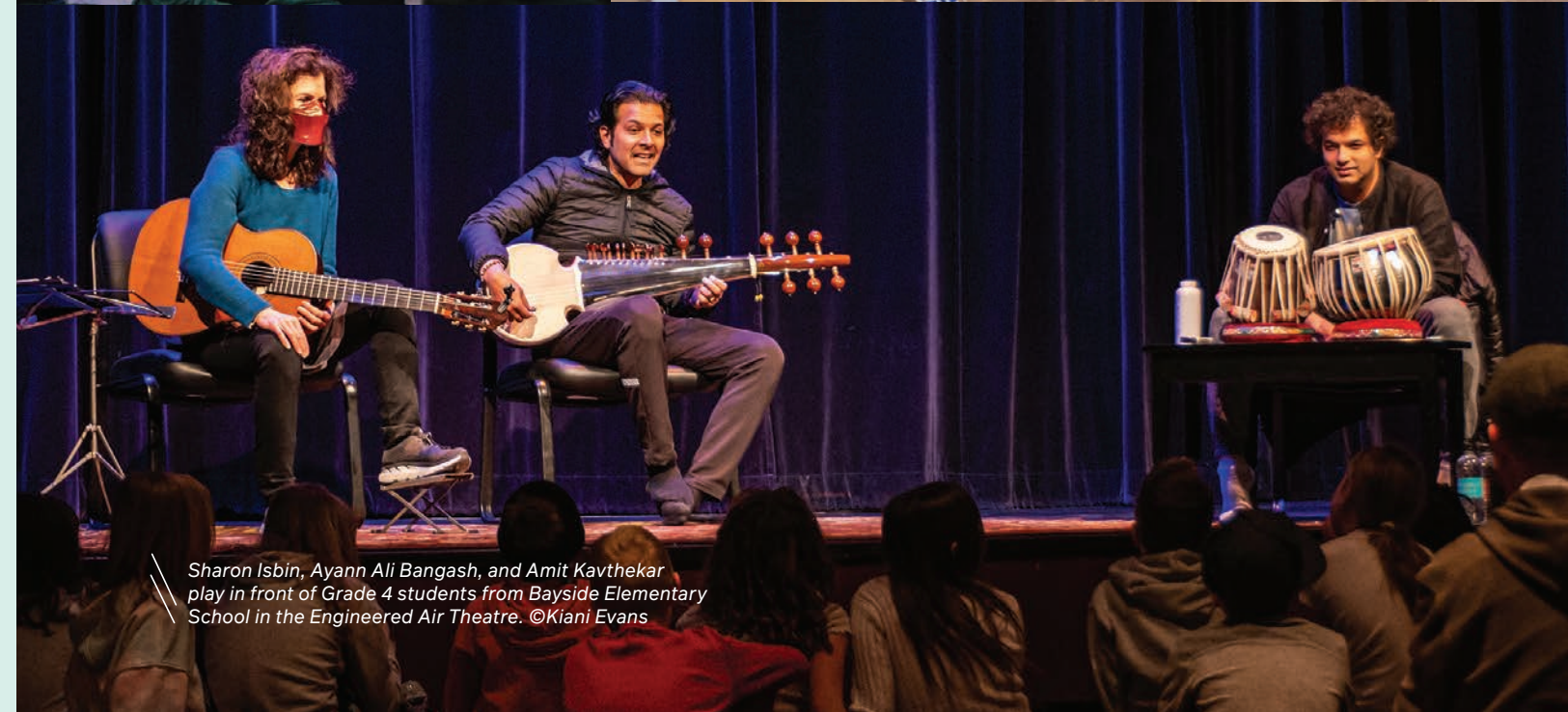
Monica O’Connell, Teacher, Notre Dame High School



Kevin Burt teaching harmonica to a class of students in the Arts Learning Centre. ©Kiani Evans



Haysam Kadri leads a stage combat class in the Max Bell Theatre upper lobby as part of Culture Days. ©Sam Obadero



Sharon Isbin, Ayann Ali Bangash, and Amit Kavthekar play in front of Grade 4 students from Bayside Elementary School in the Engineered Air Theatre. ©Kiani Evans



“Each and every student experienced a breakthrough moment during their time at Arts Commons. I know this to be true, as I continue to see their growth back at school since our time there.”

Nicole Hoye, Grade One Teacher, Mahogany School

In spring of 2022, Arts Commons sought viewpoints and a new approach to arts education. With the help of Stone-Olafson, a research consulting firm, and funded by Calgary Arts Development, Arts Commons developed an Arts Education Benchmark Survey, the first of its kind in Alberta. The learnings from this survey, which called for more direct support of teachers in the classroom, training for arts facilitators, and the education of parents about the practical benefits of arts education, has set a high bar for the education department at Arts Commons.

Launched in alignment with UNESCO's International Arts Education Week, Arts ReimaginED was the culmination of the learnings from the Benchmark Survey and the groundwork laid by Arts Commons Education throughout the 2022-23 season. Taking place over a week in late May, it offered free arts education experiences to schools and public workshops in YMCAs for a total of 148 free events, as well as hosted a world-class production of *Leonardo! A Wonderful Story About a Terrible Monster* in the Engineered Air Theatre at Arts Commons. For the free in-classroom workshops alone there were 928 requests for the 130 available spots, demonstrating the appetite for these high-quality arts education experiences. The launch week of Arts ReimaginED

culminated in a Summit with a keynote address by arts education luminary Dr. Christopher Emdin. The Summit invited teachers, parents, and arts educators to come together to collaboratively imagine the future of arts education in our city.

Hub for Inspired Learning, ConocoPhillips Canada, as well as the Norreen Baker Fund at the Calgary Foundation, the Harry & Martha Cohen Foundation, the Dinner Optimist Club of Calgary, and the Teatro Fund for Arts Commons Education.



Kids engage in shadow puppet play *Leonardo! A Wonderful Story About a Terrible Monster*. ©Alex Bonyun



Leonardo from *Leonardo! A Wonderful Story about a Terrible Monster*. ©Manual Cinema



Student artwork showcased in the Arts Learning Centre. ©Kiani Evans

To support this expansion of arts education initiatives, we launched a new Instagram page, @yycarsed. It gained over 500 followers in its first year who were eager to engage with the sense of wonder and curiosity shared by teachers, students, and our teaching artists.

This work wouldn't be possible without the generosity of our donors and sponsors and we wish to thank the naming sponsor of the ConocoPhillips



A clowning workshop lead by Zoë Arthur with students as part of Culture Days. ©Sam Obadero



Teachers, teaching artists, and members of the public participate in the Arts ReimaginED Summit. ©Sam Obadero



Connecting local artists to peers, mentors, collaborators, and audiences

Creating opportunities for artists while providing space, resources, networking, professional development, and exposure to new audiences is at the heart of Arts Commons Connects. Under this umbrella falls the TD Incubator Program and the RBC Emerging Visual Artists Program (RBC EVAP).

RBC EVAP primarily focuses on supporting visual artists, giving exhibition opportunities in Arts Commons Galleries, and providing networking and professional development opportunities. This includes a yearly portfolio review by noted gallery owner and curator Viviana

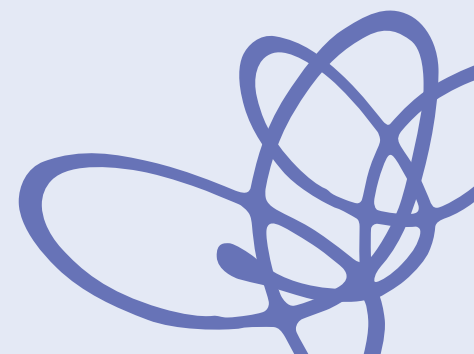
RBC EVAP participating artist CHISH began his work with Arts Commons in the Ledge Gallery, setting up a studio to paint his vivid, beautiful works. After a trip to his home in Zambia, he became interested in the process of integrating textiles into his practice. Arts Commons Connects supported his curiosity, expanding his residency into the Lightbox Studio starting in September 2023. Through his connections in RBC EVAP, he has also started mentoring with Arts Commons Education staff and artist Anthony T. Russell, another program participant, to expand his practice into teaching artistry.



VivianaArt portfolio reviews with members of the RBC Emerging Visual Artists Program. ©Kiani Evans

the location to accommodate larger numbers and make for a better experience overall. The attendance nearly doubled as a result.

Entering its second season of facilitating invaluable mentorship, networking, performance, and exhibition opportunities for local artists, the TD Incubator program took a bold new step with Sargeant X Comrade. The R&B duo came on as Fellows for the 2022-23 season, guiding the artistic vision for the program, and leading the TD Amplify Cabaret series in a new eclectic direction. All four performances of the TD Amplify Cabaret series were reimagined as an irreverent talk show in outer space to match their “Lo-Fi Future” theme for the season. It was the perfect way to introduce



Resident artist CHISH interviewed by CTV Morning Live reporter Adriana Zhang in the Lightbox Studio. ©Kiani Evans

“I was able to connect with more artists within the city and that alone was amazing, through those artists I fostered stronger connections for future collaborations not only with other musicians but with artists outside of my discipline who I have plans to work with in the future!”

TD Incubator participant

95

Artists engaged in professional development, mentorship and networking opportunities with Arts Commons

Mehr of VivianaArt gallery in Calgary. RBC EVAP alumni Nasarimba, (a collective of Calgary artists Mikhail Miller and Rachel Ziriada), was discovered through the portfolio critique process, becoming one of the curated artists in VivianaArt’s gallery spaces.

A key component of RBC EVAP is the quarterly receptions that invite the public to learn about exhibiting artists and their work, directly from the artists themselves. This season, Arts Commons increased promotion of the event through expanded marketing initiatives and shifted



Sargeant X Comrade on stage with Contra in Mars: Second Home, opening the 2022-23 TD Amplify Cabaret season. ©Sam Obadero

audiences to local artists, local artists to one another, and to spark connections and collaborations that resonated beyond the framework of the program.

Alberta-based Sufi singer-songwriter and acousmatic composer Shumaila Hemani expanded her offering in the TD Amplify Cabaret performance of *Moon: Indigo Child* by connecting and collaborating with fellow cohort member, musician James Watson. The success of this collaboration resulted in Shumaila and James opening for the Sun Ra Arkestra at Sled Island — an incredible opportunity to perform before the grandfather of Afrofuturism.

The connections created by TD Incubator continue to resonate well after the artists' time with the program has ended. Created by Lisa LaTouche and Jon McCaslin in the inaugural TD Incubator season in 2021-22, the performance piece *TapBassDrum* was awarded full funding from the Canada Council for the Arts to continue its development, and is being adapted into a short film directed by inaugural TD Incubator Fellows Jae Sterling and Contra. The film will premiere at Decidedly Jazz Danceworks with a future remount planned for Fluid Festival in October 2023. TD Incubator also welcomed

new support from Canada Council for the Arts, recognizing Arts Commons' role as a Sector Innovator.

The strength of these programs not only comes from Arts Commons, but importantly, from the artists' support of each other. This is true

“I think this program and working with Arts Commons has been one of the greatest experiences of my artistic career!”
TD Incubator participant

within the cohort, but also with touring artists from Arts Commons Presents. In February 2023, Arts Commons facilitated a private meet and greet for the TD Incubator artists with legendary blues and soul musician Booker T. Jones, who performed as part of the Arts Commons Presents Jazz series. He devoted time to connect with TD Incubator artists, offering advice and encouragement in a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Special thank you to TD Bank group for their support of the TD Incubator program.



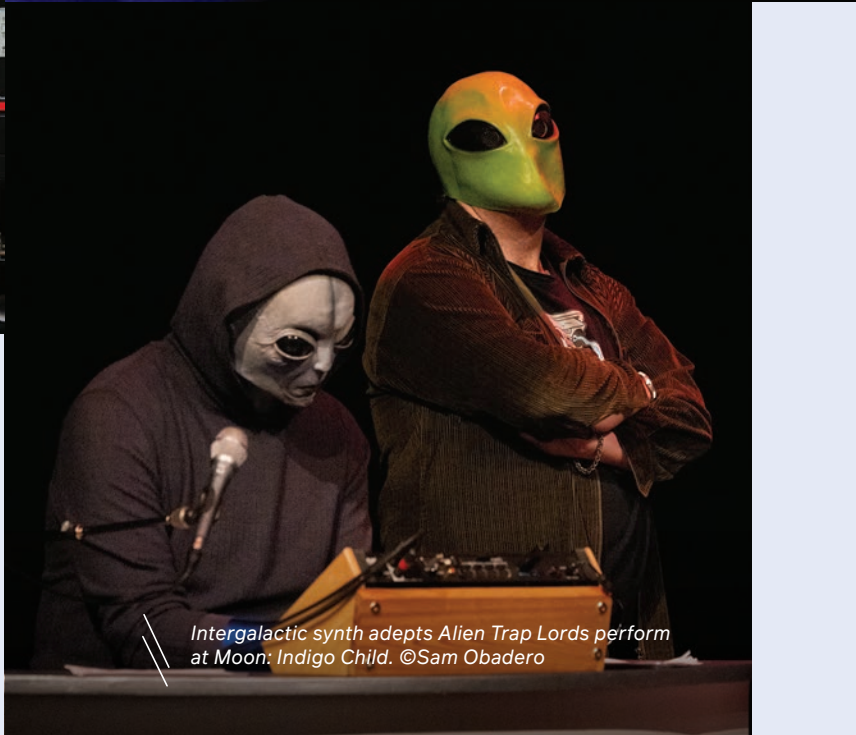
Walter MacDonald White Bear performs in *Earth: Mothership in the Engineered Air Theatre*. ©Sam Obadero



James Watson and Shumaila Hemani performing at *Moon: Indigo Child* to close out the 2022-23 season of TD Amplify Cabarets. ©Sam Obadero



Alex Sarian backstage with Booker T. Jones. ©Grey Hills Studio



Intergalactic synth adepts Alien Trap Lords perform at *Moon: Indigo Child*. ©Sam Obadero



Showcasing Calgary's visual artists in free, public exhibitions

Arts Commons Galleries offer a wide range of exhibition opportunities for local artists, from the working studio spaces of the Lightbox Studio and Ledge Gallery, to one of the few multichannel sound galleries in Canada, the +15 Soundscape. The galleries invite artists to share their vision in spaces that are free of charge for the public to visit.

In recognition of National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, the 2022-23 season of RBC Emerging Visual Artists Program (RBC EVAP) launched a partnership with the Colouring it Forward Reconciliation Society, a local Indigenous led non-profit dedicated to increasing dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. The +15 Galleries featured the work of 12 different Indigenous artists sharing paintings, drawings, beadwork, sewing regalia and star blankets, leatherwork, and photography. The works reflected the paths of each artist in healing and growth, and provided a vehicle for the public to learn about Truth and Reconciliation through the arts.

Also launching in September 2022, Anthony T. Russell's artistic process was showcased in Telus Sky's Art While You Wait gallery, a new digital

space animating the Centre Street Ctrain platform followed by Mao Projects in early 2023. Since the launch of this new collaboration, five artists have been featured, allowing Arts Commons to extend the reach of our efforts further outside of our building and infuse the daily lives of Calgarians with artistic expression.

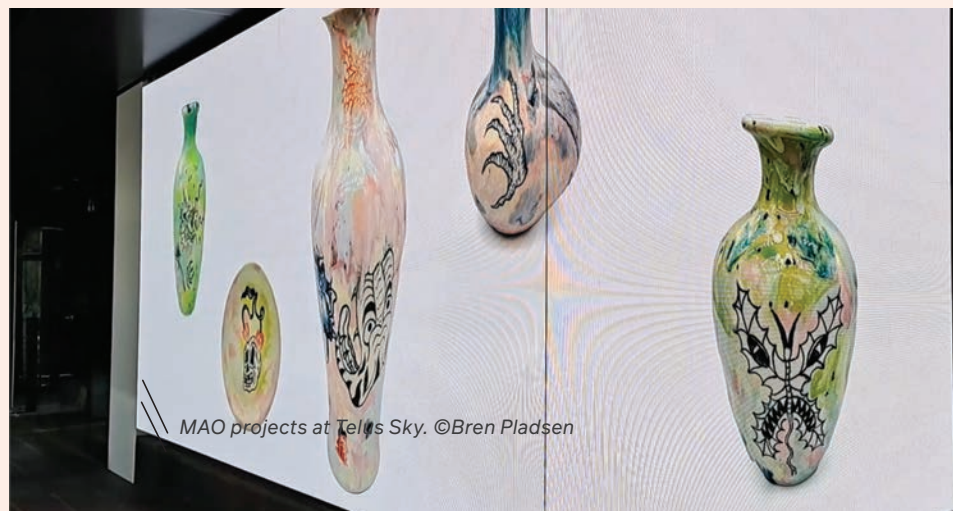
63 Artists exhibited in Arts Commons Galleries

Showcasing the incredible talent of members of RBC EVAP, KC Bae's stunning cookie portrait exhibition, *Perishable* in the Lightbox Studio, caught the attention of not only the

public, but also the media. Coverage resulted in Bae's crafting of two individual cookie portraits for the hosts of CBC Homestretch, Angela Knight and Loren McGinnis. They went on to be featured in the +15 Galleries and create food art pieces for Theatre Calgary's *The Mousetrap*.

Continuing to discover new spaces to exhibit art within our building, Arts Commons expanded on our partnership with VivianeArt exhibiting the work of emerging and mid-career Canadian artists in the reception area of Arts Commons and Calgary Philharmonic's administrative offices.

The Arts Commons Galleries continue to play a vital role in elevating the work of local, emerging artists so they can grow and reach new audiences with their work and be supported through paid exhibition opportunities. Special thank you to RBC Foundation for their support of RBC EVAP.



MAO projects at Telus Sky. ©Bren Pladsen

“My time in Lightbox Studio was a dream. Your spirit of collaboration and inclusion is what this city needs!”

Exhibiting artist, RBC Emerging Visual Artists Program participant



RBC EVAP Reception at the Lightbox Studio. ©Ava Wild



RBC EVAP reception in the Ledge Gallery. ©Sebastian Buzzalino



Anthony T. Russell speaking at an RBC EVAP Reception. ©Kim Gordon

“It was VERY educational and gave me so many tools and direction to further pursue my artistic career path. I feel like I now have a more structured road ahead of me with confidence to carry forward my future as an artist in Calgary.”

Exhibiting artist, RBC Emerging Visual Artists Program participant

Taking the lead on Canada’s largest arts and culture infrastructure project

As we prepare for the cornerstone of the City of Calgary’s downtown revitalization efforts to break ground, Arts Commons is poised for a moment of transformation, both inside and out. The Arts Commons Transformation project will not only manifest in a new 200,000-square-foot space to meet the needs of Calgary, but also expand the way that Arts Commons serves its community. The Arts Commons team has gone above and beyond to test new technologies, expand existing relationships, diversify our programming, and support greater accessibility on all levels all in preparation for this next step in our evolution.

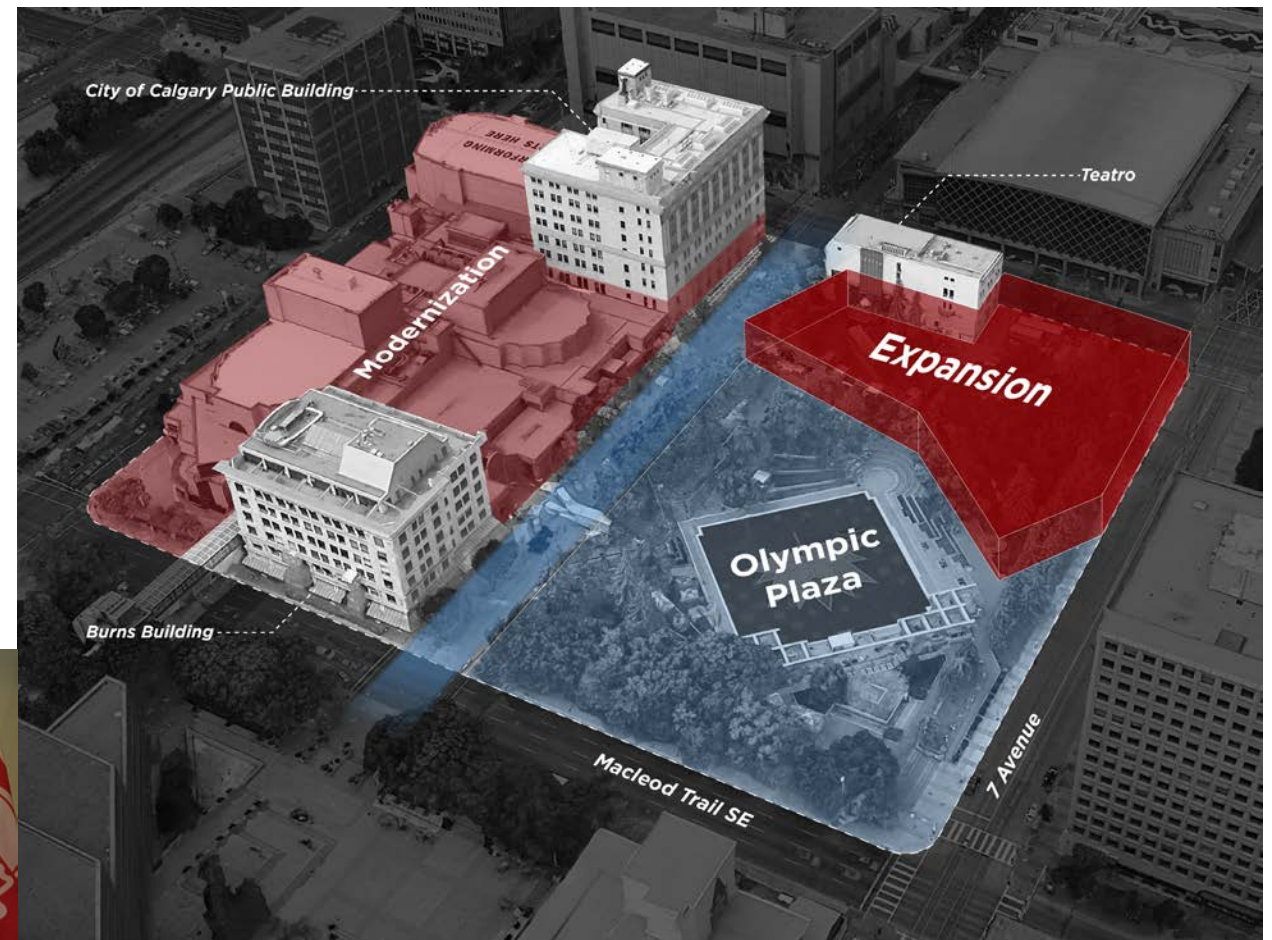
This necessity to grow to serve the needs of our evolving community is also echoed by the City of Calgary who announced on June 6, 2023 that Arts Commons, the City of Calgary, and Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (CMLC) would be driving the vision of the Olympic Plaza Transformation

forward. The Olympic Plaza Transformation intends to honour Calgary’s 1988 Olympic legacy while revising it to increase accessibility and flexibility to host a wider diversity of events and activities. Once the Plaza has completed its renovation, Arts Commons will oversee its future activation, allowing Arts Commons to expand on its mandate of stewarding cultural assets in our city on behalf of the citizens of Calgary.

The integration of the Arts Commons Transformation project with the Olympic Plaza Transformation project also creates a unique opportunity to design the two spaces in conversation with one another. In this way, Arts Commons can embrace the outdoor community space to connect more artists to more audiences, and foster a vibrant and resilient cultural presence in Calgary’s downtown core.

Together, these developments will create a new model for engagement that will be a template for other cities around the world. Through expansion, modernization, and revitalization, this project will play a key role to ensure Calgary continues to be one of the world’s most liveable cities for generations to come, attract visitors from around the globe, and aid in the success of Calgary’s Greater Downtown Plan.

We are excited to take the next steps in this process, unveiling the designs of Calgary’s newest cultural space that will draw inspiration from the landscape and history of our city and reflect the many voices of Calgary. At its completion, it will become one of the largest contiguous arts-focused spaces in Canada, a place for all to gather, share diverse experiences, and find inspiration in the arts.



Founders Circle event discusses the exciting future of the Arts Commons Transformation project. ©Will Young



Thom Mahler (City of Calgary), Kate Thompson (CMLC), and Alex Sarian (Arts Commons) at the Olympic Plaza Transformation project announcement. ©CMLC

Strength in numbers

In the 2022-23 season we built on the resources allocated to us for COVID-19 pandemic recovery and strengthened our business model, bolstering our staff and seeking new ways to fulfill our mandate to Calgary. This resulted in a return to traditional performances that saw sold-out and near sold-out performances in all venues in Arts Commons and was a strong demonstration of our value to Calgary. Despite these successes, ticket revenue fell 29% below projections as we were challenged to meet our ambitious targets.

Our venue utilization was also up \$1.8M (41%) year over year, exceeding both budget and pre-pandemic levels of activity. This is attributed to a more focused sales strategy including broadening both the type of events we hosted and our client base.

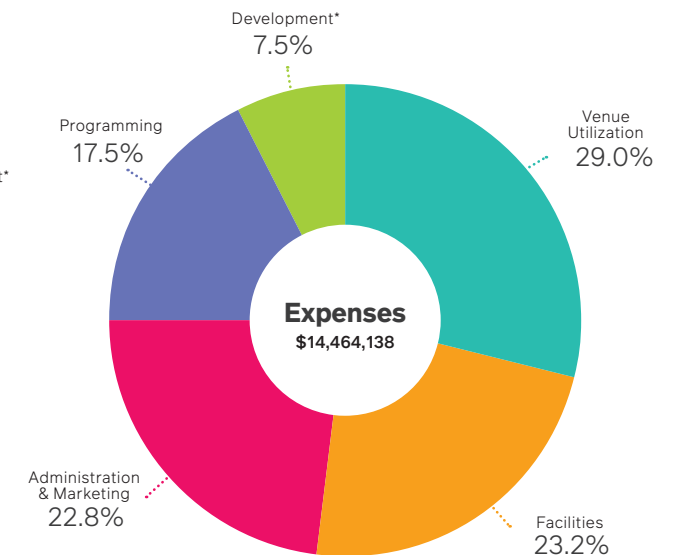
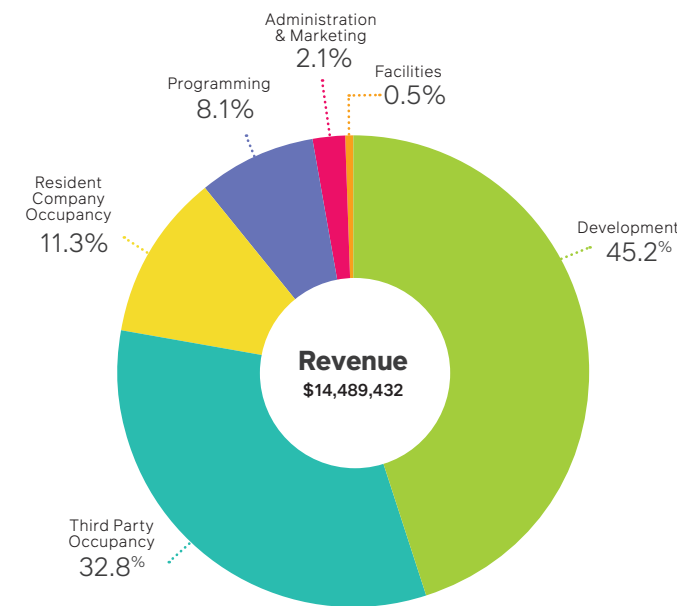
Our development office was highly successful in identifying and pursuing opportunities that lead to the team exceeding budgeted revenues by \$1.0M (20%), the majority of which came from additional project grants including support through the Government of Alberta's Stabilize Program, the City of Calgary's Arts and Culture Microgrant Tier 2, and ongoing support for employment and training from the provincial and federal governments. We attribute this grant success to strategic identification and delineation of available programs to existing Arts Commons activities. Philanthropic giving was also up 22% from our forecasted budget, another strong demonstration of our positive

impact. This included the addition of five new sponsors: Cabra Consulting Ltd, MEG Energy, Servus Credit Union, Calgary Foundation, and the Calgary Downtown Association at a time when sponsorship investment has been generally stagnant overall. When compared to our 2021-22 season, contributed revenues increased 6.4% year over year.

We continue to feel the impact of cost increases and inflation with the expenses of operating the facility. Year over year this resulted in a 7.8% increase in operation costs, with programming costs increasing by 5% over last year.

During the 2022-23 season, we entered Phase 3 of the Emergency Resiliency Fund provided by the City of Calgary. Through this program, Arts Commons has been supported in our recovery from the lasting impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The fund enables non-profits, including the City's Civic and Community Partners, to continue to serve Calgarians through the COVID-19 pandemic event by ensuring adequate services are available, and to pursue partner capacity to support Calgary's social, economic and cultural recovery.

As a continued part of our recovery, we were also able to grow and support our team's development with the support of the Government of Canada through Canada Summer Jobs and Student Work Placement and Government of Alberta through the Canada-Alberta Job Grant and Alberta Jobs Now.



* includes Gift and Services in kind



Arts Commons is the steward of one of Canada's largest arts centres, and the artistic and civic cornerstone of Calgary's downtown core, comprised of six world-class resident companies. The organization's strategic priorities include supporting the artists and arts organizations that call Arts Commons home, including more than 200 community groups that utilize our facilities to realize their missions, and to foster opportunities for collaboration across our cultural campus. By championing inclusion and reconciliation, and increasing the accessibility and reach of the arts in Calgary, we are reimagining the performing arts and ensuring their rightful place at the centre of civic life.

We wish to express our sincere appreciation to the following corporations, foundations and government agencies that provided the support that made it possible for Arts Commons to contribute to the social, economic, cultural, and intellectual life and well-being of our community.

Public Sector Support

Canada

Canadian Heritage
 Canada Arts Presentation Fund
 National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
 Re-engaging Audiences Fund for Professional Arts Presentation Organizations

Employment and Social Development Canada
 Canada Summer Jobs
 Community Services Recovery Fund
 Cultural Human Resources Council
 Student Work Placement

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Great cities invest in their futures. The Arts Commons Transformation (ACT) project represents the largest investment in any arts centre in the country – a testament to Calgary’s commitment to the arts and its appreciation of their transformative, city-building power.

We are grateful to the following for their lifetime support of ACT that will give Calgary an extraordinary campus that reflects the diverse perspectives of its citizens and makes the arts available, accessible, and relevant to all.

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Raccolto Gala

The Raccolto Gala was made possible by the exceptional team at Teatro Ristorante, led by Executive Chef David Leeder, who prepared an exclusive five-course gastronomic experience for our guests, and to the inspiring roster of artists, featuring Paul and Liz Brandt, who shared their artistry with us to raise much-needed funds to support Arts Commons Education programs.

We are grateful to the following donors and sponsors that have come together in support of Arts Commons Education and our work with Calgary’s youth.

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National Geographic Live features an international community of Explorers: leading scientists, educators, storytellers, conservationists, technologists, photographers, and filmmakers that drive new knowledge, advance innovative solutions, and inspire positive transformative change.

We are grateful to the following members of Explorers Circle that help Arts Commons present National Geographic Live, which offers unparalleled content and inspiration for student & public audiences.

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Our community helps us create a home where audiences, artists, and organizations can experience excellence on stage and behind the scenes: in our many programs for children, teachers, and aspiring artists; for the companies who call Arts Commons home; and to the hundreds of community-based organizations that depend on our support and facilities.

We are grateful to the following members of Founders Circle that support our mission and our collective success, making world-class arts and culture experiences accessible to all Calgarians.

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Susan Tyrrell, Brian Mills and Zenon at a Founders Circle Dinner. ©Will Young

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Jennifer Fournier
Valerie Fox
Mary Anne Good
Kathy Hanna
Candice Harris & Gary Petit
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Stuart Rose
Pat Rozitis
Adil Shivji
Shauna Snow-Capparelli & Frank Capparelli
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Britney Szakacs
Lucy Tan
Brenda Tempest
Patti Trussler
Natasha Varekha
Saida Vuk

Cindy Ward
Gordon Will
Matt & Denise Woofter
Michael Wright
Deidre Young



Aindya Paul, Paul and Christine Marlett at a Founders Circle Dinner. ©Will Young



Founders Circle Members Rob Nipp, Leigh-Ann Duke & Alex Sarian at a Founders Circle Event. ©Will Young

Internationally Recognized Leadership

A team of dedicated staff combines their passion to animate Arts Commons with the initiatives, programs, and events described in this report. Leading the charge is Alex Sarian, our President and CEO, who is regularly acknowledged locally and internationally for his work in discovering new ways to serve the Arts Commons community and listening to the needs of Calgarians. In 2022, he was recognized by Avenue magazine's Top 40 Under 40. Also this season, he was invited to share his insights with TedX Calgary and delivered keynote addresses at both the YYC Music Awards and the Tessitura Learning & Community Conference in Orlando, Florida.

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Patricia van de Sande

Jermyn Voon
(Downstage)

In Memoriam



Jack Jamieson
1954 - 2023

To many around Canada, Arts Commons is known purely because of Jack Jamieson's incredible work and commitment to excellence over 34 years as our Head of Sound. If you've ever enjoyed the acoustics of the Jack Singer Concert Hall, well, you have Jack to thank.

To everyone mourning this incredible loss of a mentor, friend, spouse, father, and grandfather, Arts Commons sends our heartfelt condolences and love.



Marvin "The Fly" Kee
1970 - 2023

A staple of the Calgary music community, Marvin "The Fly" Kee was known not only for his incredible artistry and musicianship in groups like the Flytrap and Sergeant X Comrade, but as a mentor and avid supporter of Calgary's arts and culture scene. He passed away suddenly prior to appearing in the TD Amplify Cabaret *Earth: Mothership*. His sound and spirit touched many, and his presence as a friend, musician, and artistic collaborator will be surely missed in our own artistic community and across Canada.



Hilaree Nelson
1972 - 2022

National Geographic Explorer Hilaree Nelson was killed in an avalanche shortly before what was to be her appearance as part of National Geographic Live. A role model and indomitable adventurer, she became the first woman to summit two 8,000-metre peaks (Everest and Lhotse) in one 24-hour push on May 25, 2012.

"She paved the way and shed a light on everything that we as female athletes aspire to become, by creating a life and career coloured by grace, grit, and wild aspirations." - Maria Granburg, climber



Choir! Choir! Choir! performing on the Jack Singer Concert Hall stage. ©Kiani Evans



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Cover image: Kardinal Offishall performs as part of Party in the Plaza
in a summer send-off on Olympic Plaza. ©Mike Tan

