

City of New Westminster | December 2019

Theatre Strategy



Cuba Vibra! Liza Alfonso Dance Cuba
Foto: Eduardo Patino | Massey Theatre



NEW WESTMINSTER

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Executive Summary

The City of New Westminster has a long history of supporting arts and culture. To meet the challenges of the future, the City has an important role to play in growing and maintaining a cultural economy that is healthy, sustainable, resilient, innovative and reflective of the community's needs.

The Theatre Strategy is the result of extensive community consultation that began in 2017 during the process of developing the New Westminster Arts Strategy 2019 - 2024. Approved in December 2018, the Arts Strategy articulates an aspirational vision - a set of values, themes that direct intentions and implementation actions for the arts. Performing arts stakeholders were actively involved in its development, and their input has informed this strategy.

"Theatre operations and performing arts development are intertwined. The second cannot grow without consistent access to a venue and sympathetic interaction between the theatre operator and the performing arts organizations."
Ellie King, RCTC, Anvil Theatre Renter

Additional material reviewed in preparation for the Theatre Strategy includes:

- previous studies and consultations, such as the 2013 Massey Theatre Task Force that envisioned a new performing arts centre if the original building were demolished;
- interviews with the City of New Westminster Cultural Services staff and key partners; and
- discussions with a broad base of theatre stakeholders in New Westminster.

The Massey Theatre complex, Anvil Theatre and Bernie Legge Theatre are the bricks and mortar that hold imaginative, exciting, challenging and thought-provoking performances in a range of disciplines including music, dance, musical theatre and drama. Together, these buildings form a core of theatre venues that serve the live performing arts as well as supporting social and civic activities, film, digital and multi-media presentations for the residents of New Westminster and the larger Metro Vancouver region.

In 2019, the position of Manager, Community Arts and Theatre was established within the City of New Westminster. The intention of this position is to provide supportive oversight for the civic theatres of New Westminster as well as managing the community arts portfolio within the City.

The Theatre Strategy Goals and Objectives are aligned with the Arts Strategy 2019-2024. The Strategic Priorities for each of the Theatres are the foundation for strong governance of the theatre portfolio and the future growth of the performing arts.

Introduction

New Westminster has a unique opportunity to capitalize on its theatre assets to support creativity, livability, innovation and cultural development.

The City of New Westminster, looking to the future with the ownership of three theatres, will create an overall portfolio that differentiates each theatre's role, based on their competitive advantage and relative market niche.

Massey Theatre

The potential inherent in the Massey Theatre to grow into a performing arts complex for New Westminster and the region is extraordinary. It is understood that the task to upgrade the building structure is enormous, and the current financial envelope is unlikely to cover the cost of the expansive dream. Nevertheless, sympathetic design and a phased plan are needed. Long term thinking would allow the Massey Theatre Society, in partnership with the community, to fundraise and to apply to foundations and other government grant programs to leverage the funds needed to provide rehearsal and incubation space.

Anvil Theatre

Simultaneously, the City will continue to focus the Anvil Theatre as an "audience ready" performing arts space. Anvil Centre has many functions with cultural, conference services, social and civic use. The Theatre is a pivotal venue requiring a continual balance of access. To ease the cross over demands, use and programming of the Theatre should continue to be largely "audience ready" – whether presented performances, local arts events, or rentals. In the offseason and non-prime time, this focus will be accompanied by the outreach and development activities to position local groups to achieve "audience ready" status.

Bernie Legge Theatre

The Bernie Legge Theatre is an example of longevity and success. It is home to one of the oldest theatrical societies in the lower mainland - the Vagabond Players. The Bernie Legge Theatre fulfills an important role in the cultural life of

New Westminster. At the grassroots level it is the entry into the theatre production world. It welcomes young and old and trains them with hands-on experiences.

Careful scheduling between the Vagabond Players and interested parties can fulfill the need for the Bernie Legge Theatre to be more available for community use.

And finally, the recommendations as outlined below, will implement the identified needs and aspirations of the community as the City develops and sustains its theatre portfolio.

Vision

The civic theatres of New Westminster provide a home for the continuum of performing arts opportunities. They serve the passionate and committed amateur player, the learner and striving performer and the professional performing artists fulfilling their career goals. The theatres are engaging and cultural entertainment centres for the residents and visitors of New Westminster.

Mission Statement

The City of New Westminster will support its unique and distinct theatre assets to provide a stable environment for the continued growth and development of all the disciplines of the performing arts. The City will establish a community development model and entrusts the staff and the non-profit societies performing in and operating the civic theatres to be true to the values and mandates assigned them.

Arts Strategy 2019-2024

The Arts Strategy set out an aspirational vision and a set of values for the future of the arts in New Westminster. The themes that directed intention and the actions for implementation are valid and underpin the Theatre Strategy.

VISION

New Westminster aspires to be a vibrant artistic centre known for supporting outstanding innovation, creativity and indigenous arts; a leader in arts presentation and delivery. This city welcomes the classical, the contemporary and the challenging. We strive to build a truly accessible cultural environment that is inclusive and respectful, and that celebrates the rich diversity of creative expression.

GOALS

Communicate:	Increase public awareness of the arts
Nurture:	Cultivate support for artists and develop audiences
Include:	Increase inclusion and accessibility in the arts
Generate:	Create economic opportunities and increase contribution to the arts
Innovate:	Embrace and encourage innovative ideas

Community-Wide Goals and Objectives

These goals and objectives were gleaned from the community consultations and are aligned with the Arts Strategy 2019-2024 themes.

Goals

1. Cultivate and communicate an environment of possibilities and growth for artists and audiences at our civic theatres, igniting a passion for the performing arts. *Communicate*

2. Provide the opportunity and support an enabling atmosphere that allows performing arts to grow and stimulate creative and economic activity in the community. *Nurture*

3. Foster success in creation, presentation and development for local performing artists and organizations.
4. Leverage the civic theatres to grow the Arts sector of the local economy through education and training opportunities. *Generate*

5. Invite indigenous artists in music, dance, storytelling and theatre to take advantage of opportunities to animate the civic theatres. *Include*

6. Create opportunities for the diversity of performers across cultural, ethnic and minority segments of the population to be part of the programming mix at the civic theatres. *Innovate*



Savage Productions Society, *White Noise* by Taran Kootenayoo, March 2019, Photo: Melody Charlie
Cast: Mariel Belanger, Sam Bob, Craig Erickson, Braiden Houle, Pippa Mackie, Anita Wittenberg,
Director: Renae Morriseau,
Set Design: Laughlin Johnston, Projection & Sound Design: Candelario Adrade,
Lighting Design: Brad Trenamen

Objectives

Communicate

- Establish opportunities for the cross-promotion of all performing arts in New Westminster, including the commercial venues.

Nurture

- Develop initiatives to improve the affordability of theatres to all segments of users from amateur to the professional and their audiences.
- Establish collaborative relationships between municipal staff teams and the non-profit societies working and performing in the civic theatres.

Generate

- Facilitate employment growth in the local Arts sector through education and training opportunities at the civic theatres.
- Consider new spaces, as performance spaces are required and as opportunities arise.

Include

- Facilitate where possible the use of other municipal facilities for the performing arts, including such activities as rehearsals, auditions and performances.

Innovate

- Facilitate unique and innovative performances in non-traditional venues.
-



Shadows and Dreams Theatre Company: Romeo and Juliet 2018
Photo: Jennifer Gauthier, New Westminster Record
Queen's Park

Governance and Mandates

For each of the civic theatres, the Manager, Community Arts and Theatre will provide oversight and supportive direction in the implementation of the theatre's Strategies Priorities.

Massey Theatre

1. Goals

- 1.1. Establish the Massey Theatre as "*The Centre for Performing Arts in New Westminster and the Region.*"
- 1.2. Support the Massey Theatre Society to continue and expand its role as a leader in local performing arts development for the benefit of the community.

2. Objectives

- 2.1. Renovate the Massey Theatre and complex to modern standards fulfilling the vision of a performing arts centre, a community gathering place and a regional destination.
- 2.2. Reaffirm the governance model of the Massey Theatre Society as the trustee and operator of the Massey Theatre complex.
- 2.3. Encourage the presentation of major performing arts touring productions and concerts suitable to the large seating capacity.
- 2.4. Support the Massey Theatre to become an innovative centre for the creative development of the performing arts for New Westminster and the region.

3. Strategic Priorities

- 3.1 Negotiate mutually beneficial roles and responsibilities within a co-management agreement on a 25-year term.
- 3.2 Confirm with the Massey Theatre Society the appropriate mandate for rental, presenting and development of the performing arts with a measurable scope of achievement and financial sustainability.
- 3.3 Establish a long term-plan and design that will allow for the future modernization of the interior spaces and also provide for the development of affordable rehearsal spaces and a small studio theatre.
- 3.4 Support the continuation of youth programs in theatre operations training and experience for entry level employment in the performing arts.

- 3.5 Plan for and provide resources for operating support for staff during construction, transition and stabilization period.
- 3.6 To maintain long term viability of the Massey Theatre Society, the City should develop a renovation phasing strategy that enables Massey Theatre Society to maintain operation during critical performance seasons.
- 3.7 The City to work with the Massey Theatre Society to fundraise and secure senior government funding to fulfill the long term vision of the theatre and performing arts complex.

Anvil Theatre

1. Goals

- 1.1. To support and promote the cultural precinct of Downtown, Anvil Theatre will feature a diversity of performing arts including innovative, exciting and entertaining music, dance and theatre performances.
- 1.2. To ensure a balance of uses and build on the synergies and opportunities within Anvil Centre, Anvil Theatre will promote audience-ready productions and performances.

2. Objectives

- 2.1. Align the theatre operations with the Arts Strategy, 2019-2024
- 2.2. Provide building improvements for theatre users and audiences.
- 2.3. Establish a long-term operating plan for the Anvil Theatre with the Manager, Community Arts and Theatre and theatre stakeholders.
- 2.4. Address accessibility and affordability concerns for the use of the Anvil Theatre for resident non-profits and performing arts teaching enterprises.
- 2.5. Establish a performing arts development advisory committee to support presenting and developmental programming.
- 2.6. Continue to build relationships with the local performing arts organizations and teaching institutions recognizing the importance of the civic theatre to their endeavours and to the youth of New Westminster.

3. Strategic Priorities

- 3.1. Continue with the Massey Theatre Society operating and programming agreement to June 2021 to maintain the momentum of audience building through professional presentations.

- 3.2. Prioritize the funding of audience ready productions and performances with an increased variety of performances in theatre, music and dance for local and regional audiences, balancing them with the ongoing commercial use of the theatre by conference services. Secondary consideration will be funding for unique creative performances, talks and events in support of city innovation, Reconciliation and cultural strategies.
- 3.3. Initiate opportunities for greater cultural diversity in programming at Anvil Theatre. Special emphasis is placed on collaborative relationship building with indigenous arts, groups and organizations.

Bernie Legge Theatre

1. Goals

- 1.1. Support the Vagabond Players as a volunteer organization and the important role they play in local theatrical training and entertainment.
- 1.2. Recognizing that the Bernie Legge Theatre is a valued civic asset, create opportunities for greater community use.

2. Objectives:

- 2.1. Create governance and operational stability for the Vagabond Players, and that allows for increased community access.
- 2.2. Adapt and improve the public realm in and around the Bernie Legge Theatre to accommodate more users and an ageing population.

3. Strategic Priorities

- 3.1. Develop a capital maintenance program that improves accessibility and visibility of the theatre within Queens Park.
- 3.2. Create a multi-year lease agreement with Vagabond Players that obligates greater community use and access to the Bernie Legge Theatre.
- 3.3. City to consider incentivizing greater community access when renegotiating the new lease with Vagabond Players.



Vagabond Players, Melville Boys by Norm Foster, 2019
 Photo by Craig Premack
 Cast of "The Melville Boys"
 Bernie Legge Theatre

Theatre Strategy Development

The Theatre Strategy was commissioned to provide background and context for the City of New Westminster to consider governance models for the three theatre venues that will make up the civic theatre portfolio: Massey Theatre (June 2020), Anvil Theatre (2014) and Bernie Legge Theatre (1979). Community consultation informed the mandate directions and the leadership that is required for the ongoing development of the performing arts.

The scope of work for the Theatre Strategy was outlined in three phases:

1. Host an engagement process with key stakeholders and the public; hold interviews and focus group discussions and build on the information that was collected in previous consultations and planning initiatives.
2. Articulate the vision, goals and objectives in an integrated and aligned Theatre Strategy reflecting the themes identified in the Arts Strategy 2019-2024 and the commitments in the Official Community Plan.
3. Provide context and background as well as industry trends and best practices to assist the City of New Westminster in establishing a sustainable plan for its theatre portfolio.

Community Consultation & Key Learnings

A significant amount of research and preparation informed the Arts Strategy (2019-2024), approved in December 2018. The raw data and focus group minutes were mined for allied issues identified by performing arts groups and individuals. In 2013, a Massey Performing Arts Centre Task Force was established which envisioned the components of a physical complex to replace the current building if it were to be demolished. The hopes, dreams and ideas collected during these two processes have informed the Theatre Strategy.

June – December 2018, consultations began with interviews and discussions with the key stakeholders of the Massey Theatre, the Anvil Theatre and the Bernie Legge Theatre.

Municipal staff involved in the operation and support services for the civic theatres, as well as Cultural Services staff, were interviewed.

January - April 2019, independent producers, small theatre companies, interested individuals, music, theatre, dance and performance schools were contacted and interviewed.

On May 4, 2019, a community workshop was held with interested individuals and theatre stakeholders.

A detailed summary of all consultations is on-line in the Report Compendium.

What we learned

The contribution of the many community members that have participated throughout the processes to date is applauded. Much of what has been identified as physical needs for the theatres are known, and plans are underway to address improvements or alterations. Nevertheless, many theatre stakeholders believe that formalizing issues in the Theatre Strategy will provide a historical foundation and a benchmark from which to chart success for the future. Where work has already begun, the status at the time of writing this report is noted.

- Need for security and operating governance for the long term. (*Negotiation and planning with Massey Theatre Society for Massey Theatre renovation in process*)
- Need for a single point of contact and communication that allows for responsive action. (*The position of a Manager, Community Arts and Theatre has been established*).
- Artistic product is most important no matter what the governance model. (*Massey Theatre Society contract for Anvil Theatre programming contract extended*).
- Theatre stakeholders want the City to deal with each venue as unique because each provides a different experience and level of community participation.
- Theatre operations and performing arts development are connected. With a place to perform and support from the theatre staff, performing arts organizations have a home and opportunities.
- With the increase in small performance ensembles, there is a shortage of performance spaces that are the appropriate size.
- Affordable access to the performing arts should be available to audiences regardless of economic status.
- Insufficient opportunities exist for the growing diversity of our community to be included.
- Youth involvement and encouragement is important because they are the performing arts audiences, performers and technologists of the future.
- Promotion and coordinated marketing continue to be a significant issue. A single access point for all event information would be helpful.

- Participants reiterated that the Theatres should bring the best of professional events to the stages for the residents of New Westminster.



May 4, Community Workshop

“The theatre stakeholders in New Westminster are knowledgeable and skilled artists and administrators. They are passionate about theatre and the buildings they work in. They are adaptable and creative problem solvers.” Workshop participant

Market Scan & Best Practices

National and Regional Trends

Based on consultations with Executive Directors and Managers of successful regional and national theatre facilities, the following trends emerged.

- Blockbuster musicals are no longer touring across Canada for extended runs.
- Top performers are looking for more intimate venues than the big arenas.
- Civic “rental only” theatres (roadhouses) are moving into programming and presenting to display dynamic use of the facility.
- The best way to promote a theatre for increased rentals is to successfully present events in it.
- Audiences are looking for an expert to curate the programming.
- Large civic theatres are finding ways to include a non-profit society in their operating structure for the following reasons:

- Fundraising and soliciting sponsorship is most successful when supported by working volunteers who have connections in the community.
- Professional presentations can sometimes tap into alternate government and foundation funding sources under the auspices of a non-profit society.
- Innovative, experimental, and risky programming is more palatable to municipalities if it is arms-length from the political decision makers.
- Non-profit societies can respond promptly and establish risk-sharing arrangements with performing artists or producers.

Theatre Assets

Each theatre asset is a distinct venue and has an important role to play in the performing arts in New Westminster. This section explores each theatre, its background, existing building profile and mandate within the community.

Venue Summary

Massey Theatre	Anvil Theatre	Bernie Legge Theatre
Located on the corner of 8th Ave. and 8th St.	Located in Anvil Centre on Columbia Street	Located in Queens Park
Purpose built in 1948-1949	Purpose built, opened in 2014	An old fish hatchery turned into a playhouse in 1950 by the Vagabond Players
Operated and programmed by the Massey Theatre Society. Lease agreement with SD#40 until June 2020.	Operated and programmed for the City of New West by the Massey Theatre Society since 2015	Operated under a lease and producing theatrical productions by Vagabond Players Society since 1950
Proscenium auditorium with balcony - 1260 seats: Orchestra 867 Balcony 393 Fly Tower, hemp rigging system for lights, travelers and sets.	Flat floor theatre with 361 telescopic seats Flexible configuration for proscenium, cabaret or flat floor. Lights, travelers and sets rigged from the grid.	Proscenium stage with small audience chamber of 140 seats with a central aisle Lights, sets and curtain rigged from the grid.
Updated and sophisticated technical equipment	State of the art, 2014 technical equipment	Basic technical equipment

Equipment and theatre assets owned by Massey Theatre Society.	Equipment and theatre assets owned by the City of New Westminster.	Equipment and theatre assets owned by Vagabond Players Society.
Professional staff of 10 permanent plus auxiliaries.	Professional staff of 1 full time and 3 p/t managed by Massey Theatre Society.	Operated by the volunteers executive committee of the membership.
Home to local and regional major performing arts organizations, present, and community programs.	Presents a professional series of events, rentals and unique developmental opportunities.	Produce a 5-play season Sept – June annually. Youth theatre camp in the summer.
Performance season 2018-19: 193 dates Attendance 57,086	Arts Season Jan -Dec 2018 48 events Total theatre use: 75 events Arts Attendance 11,350	2018-2019 season 5 plays Attendance 2018: 7,495 Average house 70.7%

Mission Statement:

“Massey Theatre Society is a catalyst for a vibrant, expressive community and stage where any dream is possible. We are committed to nurturing and supporting the performing arts with respect and integrity.”

Mission Statement for the Anvil Theatre:

“The development of a dynamic programming vision, implemented and made sustainable through professional and community partnership, serves to enhance the cultural lives of a growing population.”

Mission Statement:

“Providing entertainment to the residents of New Westminster and surrounding communities by providing theatrical productions.”

A fuller description of each venue is in the on-line Report Compendium.

Local Performing Arts

The performing arts in New Westminster are associated with the theatre or venue in which they perform. It is here that they have the opportunities needed to display their talent and passion.

The Massey Theatre is the home base of the Royal City Youth Ballet, Royal City Musical Theatre, Maple Leaf Singers and the New Westminster Symphony. New Westminster Secondary School performing arts; music, dance and musical theatre continue to showcase here.

The Bernie Legge Theatre has been the home of the Vagabond Players, an amateur theatrical society for the past 50 years.

The Anvil Theatre since its opening 2014 has seen Patrick Street Productions, Royal Canadian Theatre Company, Savage Production Society and a niche series of concerts and outstanding events programmed on behalf of the City by the Massey Theatre Society.

Independent producers, presenters and musical organizations include:

- City Stage New West (performing original work at Holy Trinity Cathedral and Galbraith House),
- Shadows and Dreams Theatre Co. (at the gazebo in Queens Park)
- Alchemy Theatre Ensemble – co-production with Vagabond Players
- Page Theatre – summer co-production with the Vagabond Players
- Music @Queens, (at Queens Avenue United Church,) hosts the West Coast Symphony, local and regional choirs and chamber groups.
- Royal City Concert Band,
- New Westminster and District Concert Band,
- A variety of jazz ensembles and independent musicians.
- The New West Film Society presents a three-day FilmFest in October.

The Laura Muir Theatre at Douglas College is the teaching lab for the Theatre and Music programs. The students of Douglas College and those from NWSS volunteer for on-site experience at the Massey Theatre and the Anvil Theatre.

The commercial standouts include the independent presenters that work at the Columbia Theatre that houses the Qayqayt Stage, Amicus Arts Club and Laughlines Comedy Club, as well as live music venues: Heritage Grill, Old Crow Coffee Co, Coming Home Café, and Neil Douglas Music Store, among others.

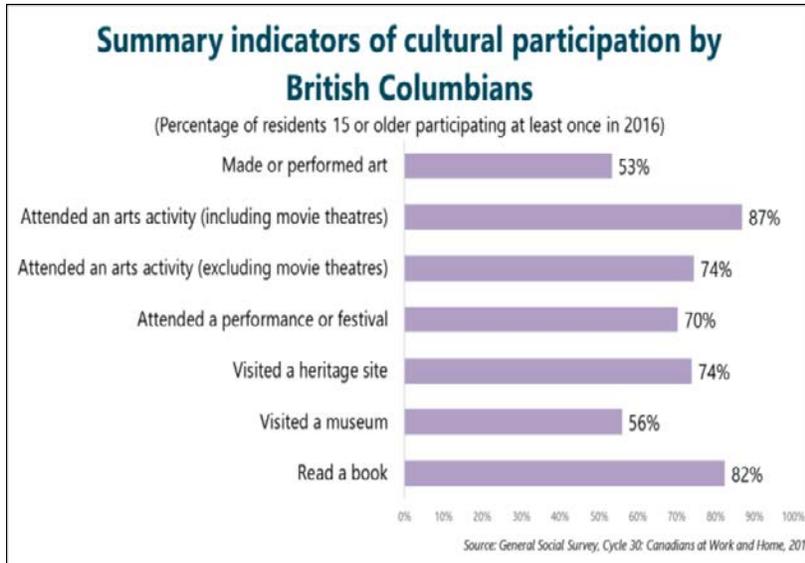
Economic Impact of Performing Arts

Over the past 30 years, the economic impact of cultural activity, industries and cultural tourism have been studied and identified. The arts and cultural economy is a positive reason to encourage investment in arts and cultural development. The Ontario Arts Council estimates that for each \$1 invested in an arts activity, \$8 is returned to the community in economic impact. The research and reporting of the benefit of any major element of the economy is a complex field requiring specialized expertise.

“In 2016, virtually all Canadians (15 or older) participated in some type of arts, culture, or heritage activity (100%, or 99.5% if rounded to one decimal place). This is one insight from *Canadians’ Arts, Culture, and Heritage Participation in 2016*, the 47th report in the *Statistical Insights on the Arts* series from Hill

Strategies Research, based on Statistics Canada’s 2016 *General Social Survey (Canadians at Work and Home)*.”

The chart courtesy of Hill Strategies Research shows the analysis for BC.



How these numbers translate into economic impact is a complex issue and beyond the scope of this report. Broad and generalized statements are sometimes viewed with skepticism by pragmatic business people and politicians. In the real world of New Westminister without large tourist hotels and major cultural institutions, the impact is modest but respectable for its population base.

A simple example was provided by a local dance school, located near Anvil Centre. The dance school holds its annual concert at the Alice Muir Theatre at Douglas College. The families and friends coming to the performance report that they make it a special event and eat out as at local restaurants or come early to walk the shops while the dancers prepare. The result is an increased attendance at restaurants and businesses. During rehearsals, the surrounding fast food outlets are also busier.

The City of New Westminister has designated the downtown core as an arts and cultural hub of the city. The cultural map created in 2013 shows the many cultural opportunities in the downtown core and throughout New Westminister.

In most cases, visitors to New Westminister are the residents of Metro Vancouver that come to visit the sights and sounds of New Westminister’s quay, markets, public artworks, galleries, museums and performances at the theatres.

The spending is not equal to the formulas used for hotel stays and extended visits by foreign tourists, nevertheless, the more attractions that exist and are

unique to New Westminster, the longer the visitors stay, thus the greater the benefits to local shops and restaurants. A focussed economic impact is realized.

Anvil Theatre Client Survey

A survey was distributed to the Anvil Theatre Ticket mailing list in 2018. It was initiated to provide economic impact information.

The majority of theatre-going patrons stop near the theatre for food and beverage, spending an average of \$30 each, and arrive by car to guarantee a place to park. No one required overnight accommodation because the respondents were New West residents.



Primarily respondents came to attend a play or a performing arts event, although responses also included visits to the Museum, the New Media Gallery and conference events.

Replying to the question of how they learned about an event, respondents provided an extensive list of the traditional media outlets, social media, word of mouth, direct emailing, and online event listings.

Although there were limitations with the survey, it does reflect the positive attitude of patrons to Anvil Theatre.

The economic impact of those dollars on the City's downtown businesses is hard to assess accurately; however, a conservative calculation can provide some insight to the multiplier effect. The following can be extrapolated, using a very simplistic method.

Total annual audience in 2018 was 11,350 for 48 performances that is an average of 237 people per event. For the ease of calculating, we use 200 people per event (55% of the house). The audience survey told us that individuals spend \$30 before attending the performance.

- \$30 X 200 theatre visitors per performance = \$6,000
- In 2018 the 48 performances events added an estimated \$288,000 into local restaurants.

A review of the 2018 theatre events; twenty-four (24) were on a weekend night(s) January to May and October to December. Spending on weekend outings is assumed to be notably higher than mid-week; therefore, the economic impact could be assessed as higher. If asked, the restaurateurs can only report anecdotally if they were busier on a particular night and attribute it to a theatre event at Anvil Theatre.

A vibrant and safe downtown is the result of people of all ages moving comfortably in and out of the area, shopping, visiting, eating, and attending events.

“If the downtown is a destination for pleasure and enjoyment, residents will invite their friends to join them. Visitors like to explore what locals already treasure.” Cultural Tourism Place-Based Approach:UVIC

The multiplier for the Massey Theatre is estimated differently. Due to its location and because a portion of the events are rentals that draw audiences from throughout the Lower Mainland, certain assumptions are made.

Using the total attendance of 57,086 at Massey Theatre in the 2017-2018 season, 63% of the audience from ticket data are non-City residents. A conservative estimate is that only 30% of the audience dined in New Westminster before or after a performance and spent \$30 per person:

- $57,086 \times 30\% = 17,126$ individuals
- $17,126 \times \$30 = \$513,774.00$

One might assume that New Westminster residents would as a matter of residency eat locally, but if this 30% of the audience is from outside of the City, then this spending is money coming into the community that may not have come in otherwise. Other economic impacts could be calculated with more in-depth analysis as a result of employment expenditures, ticket sales and other inputs.

It would be unwise to assume that the financial impact noted here is a direct benefit to the City's economy. There are many other considerations that affect an accurate calculation; nevertheless, this glimpse into the potential of growing audience attendance at both the renovated Massey Theatre and Anvil Theatre is an encouraging target.

Cultural Consumers of New Westminster

In 1992 and 1998, a comprehensive survey was sponsored by Heritage Canada and the Canada Council conducted by Decima Research identifying the profile of the art consumer. Although dated, it is still the most in-depth analysis done in

Canada because thousands of Canadians were surveyed by telephone. The conclusions still stand up today.

- People who have been introduced to the arts as children continue to participate throughout their lives and provide the same opportunities for their children.
- People with post-secondary education, even if not completed, are the attendees at theatres, art galleries and museums at home at least once a year and when travelling are cultural tourists.
- Classical genres in music and theatre attract an older demographic.
- Youth and young adults are exploring and attending the popular arts – rock concerts, multi-media shows, and large live festival events in growing numbers.

“Although many things are changing as a result of technology and social media, the understanding of who and why people engage in the arts has not changed. It is a natural and inherent desire to express who we are and share that experience with others in live performances”. P Feldman, CAPACOA

In New Westminster, the 2016 Census shows that of the 71,000 people who live in the City, 43,360 have a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree (for a population aged 25-64 years). A healthy percentage of the City’s total population is well-educated and the market segment attracted to the performing arts. Of that number 2,290 are graduates of the visual and performing arts and communications technologies category and the remainder are distributed throughout the humanities, social sciences, health professions and parks, recreation, leisure and fitness.

With the central development of high-rise condominiums, an affordable housing strategy, public transportation via the sky train, arts focussed programs at Douglas College and New West Secondary School; and the City’s commitment to arts and culture, New Westminster is a very attractive place to live.



Patrick Street Productions, A Little Night Music by Stephen Sondheim, May 2018
Photo: David Cooper
Artists: Warren Kimmel and Katey Wright
Director: Peter Jorgensen
Musical Director: Sean Bayntun Assistant Director: Chris Allan
Set & Lighting Design: Alan Brodie
Costume Design: Jessica Bayntun

Governance Options for Civic Theatres

A civic theatre is a performing arts venue that is owned, maintained, staffed and operated by the City as a community amenity. A municipality can engage a non-profit society to operate a civic theatre on its behalf, through a lease, fee for service or co-management agreement. Outlined below are the pros and cons of each operating model and assigned mandate:

Municipally Operated

Non-Profit Society Operated

Municipal employees in the bargaining unit	Society employees at par with theatre industry levels
Accountable to a municipal department such as Cultural Services, Parks and Recreation or Community Services	Governance Board of Directors reporting directly to City Council within the terms of the co-management agreement.
Capital and Operating budgets are part of a municipal budget	Non-profit Society receives a subsidy or set operating fee according to the terms of the lease or “co-management agreement.”
Budgets are zero-based on an annual basis	Profit is put into reserve when accrued as deficits drawn from the reserve.
Local performing arts organizations receive support for the use of the theatre through grants or through a reduced rental rate from an established cost recovery base rate.	Support for local performing arts organizations is established in the operating agreement and most often the same as a municipally operated theatre.
A municipal theatre does not qualify for many senior government arts development grants and incentives.	A society can apply to senior governments for touring programs for professional dance, theatre and music.
Fundraising for operating and programming is challenging for a municipal theatre except under specific and unique circumstances.	Fundraising for promotional sponsorship and direct support for specific programs is common and part of the operating scope of the society

Mandates

Municipalities are risk-averse and commonly keep to a rental only mandate.	A society can provide the “performing arts development” leadership at the direction of a city.
Provide a programming budget for staff to	A society can establish an artistic brand

provide performing arts and entertainment for the community.	and reputation for offering quality performance events in a full spectrum of performing arts disciplines.
Decision for change or altering mandates requires municipal policy direction.	Nimble and responsive to opportunities for programming and local arts initiatives, hiring and purchasing needs.
Establish a “Friends of the theatre” and negotiate an agreement with the Union to allow volunteers to work for community and school rentals and local non-profit society.	Continue a strong volunteer program of training for student stage crews, and front of house ushers and ticket takers, security and other operating needs. This provides two benefits – operating cost saving and direct engagement with the community.
Volunteerism supports student training as stage crews and technicians and community members as Front of House ushers and ticket takers. The latter is successful for seniors who can no longer afford ticket prices but love the theatre.	Ability to travel and see work and initiate presentations for the theatre. The cycle of planning and budgeting are on a theatre season not on a municipal budget cycle.

1. Cowichan Theatre, Duncan BC is an example of a municipally operated theatre with a programming mandate.

2. Volunteerism has been successfully established and maintained at the Anvil Theatre, New Westminster.

Mandate variations:

- Some civic theatres have a promotions budget and are mandated to bring in arts and entertainment to their community. This is most common in smaller communities at a distance from a large municipality. For example, the Cowichan Theatre in Duncan BC presents 35-40 professional events.
- Under a broader arts development mandate, some civic theatres have the authority to share in the risk of a professional presentation or production through a profit-sharing arrangement from ticket sales.
- The theatre operates its own box office, so it is always paid first from the revenue generated. The risk is minimal if it exists at all. The Royal and McPherson Theatres operated by a non-profit society in Victoria BC are an example.

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Glossary of terms

For purposes of this Theatre Strategy, the following terms and definitions are in use:

Roadhouse is a theatre that is primarily a rental facility for performance and special events. The ticket revenue accrues to the organization or the performers after the rent, and all extra costs are paid. The theatre will reserve dates for their historic users who return year after year before opening the calendar to other interested parties.

Audience ready is a performance event that has been created, rehearsed and except for short set up and lighting adjustment in the theatre when it arrives, is ready for an audience. The performers can also move out of the theatre following the performance or at the very least the next day. Theatrical productions often need one day before and one day following their performance due to complexity of the play or comedy, the sets and decorations that are put up and lighting and sound cues that need to be programmed into the equipment.

Presenting is booking performing arts shows that are “audience ready,” and the performers are paid a fee. Box office revenue accrues to the theatre.

Programming is a community development process that assists performing arts groups to create and produce works for performance. It is common for the cost to be shared between the venue and the company. Depending on the readiness of the work, a grant is obtained to allow the company appropriate developmental time. Ticket revenue is also shared.

Producing is the process of selecting a discipline, hiring all the necessary directors, designers, performers, and crew, rehearsing and paying all costs until the product is ready to move into a theatre. When a theatre has a resident company, this is a process that occurs for established periods before the production is put on the stage for the public.

Box Office is the ticket selling and distribution service of tickets for an event. A commission is charged for each ticket sold to the audience or printed for the client for their distribution. Service charges vary according to the percentage commission to the seller, the commission to the software program used, the credit card service charges for purchase, the venue surcharge and taxes. The least expensive service is most often the

venue's own box office because they cater to their local groups and audiences.

Theatre Season is the period between September and June that straddles the new year. It matches the school calendar. Summer use of theatre is limited because audiences prefer to attend outdoor festival concerts and productions. The summer is a good time to provide access for developmental work if it does not conflict with annual maintenance, cleaning, training sessions or other uses.

Booking cycle is a planning process that occurs at least one full season (year) before the performance dates. For high profile performers, it may be necessary to book them two and three years in advance of their performance. Preliminary conversations with agents often occur, and dates are held until the event can be contracted.

Presenting professional works that complement established series, fit the market demand in the region and avoid competitive events are vital considerations in the booking cycle. When a presenter is working far enough in advance, the theatre can demand regional exclusivity to guarantee drawing the largest audience to the theatre.

All theatres are as a matter of course "roadhouses" because they will rent to anyone who can pay the cost.

In New Westminster, the Theatre Strategy recommends that the civic theatres place presenting and programming as a higher priority than just renting.

The Theatre's role is twofold:

1. To **present** events and performances according to audience demand to enrich the lives of the community.
2. To **program** the opportunities for performing arts organizations to perform their creation or chosen discipline. These can be local or touring and include the disciplines of drama, comedy, dance and music as well as literary readings and multi-media productions.

Acknowledgements

Council of the City of New Westminster and Senior Staff

Project Consultant: Oksana Dexter, Consultant for the Arts

Project Manager: Carolyn Armanini, Planner, Economic Development

Cultural Services staff:

Rob McCullough, Manager Museum and Heritage Services,

Sarah Joyce, Director and Curator, New Media Gallery,

Vali Marling, General Manager Anvil Centre,

Hannah Bennett, Arts Programmer.

Members of the 2018-2019 Arts Commission

Special thank you to the following individuals and organizations for their engagement and participation:

Jessica Schneider, Executive Director of the Massey Theatre Society

The Massey Theatre Society Board of Directors

Stephen O'Shea, Executive Director, New Westminster Arts Council

Executive of the New Westminster Symphony Orchestra

Membership of the Vagabond Players

Jeremy Heynen, President of Vagabond Players (2018-2019),

Katey Wright, Patrick Street Productions

Chelsea Carlson, Producer, Royal City Musical Theatre Society

Travis Johnson, Director, Vancouver Circus School

Michael Hwang, Manager of the Columbia Theatre

Kelly Proznick, Head of Visual and Performing Arts, NWSS

Thrasso Petras, Theatre Coordinator, Performing Arts, Douglas College

Marilyn Galaugher, Manager - Dance Matrix

Christian Bideau, New West Music

Stefanie Swannard, City Stage New West

Matthew Davenport, Alchemy Theatre Society

Alexandra Wilson and Miles Lavkulich, Page Theatre

Royal City Youth Ballet – Board of Directors

Renée Bucciarelli, Artistic Director, City Stage New West

Ellie King, Artistic Director, Royal Canadian Theatre Company