RED DEER
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

LEADERSHIP

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends and Supporters of the Red Deer Symphony Orchestra,

Reflecting on the past year, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the extraordinary achievements of the Red Deer Symphony Orchestra. The 2023/24 season has been a testament to our resilience, innovation, and unwavering commitment to bringing exceptional orchestral music to our community.

This year, we celebrated our 37th season with remarkable milestones and a renewed sense of purpose. Our Main Series concerts captivated audiences, with each performance drawing between 400 and 550 enthusiastic attendees. The timeless beauty of pieces like those performed in *A Night at the Opera* and the sheer joy of our *May the Fourth Be With You* concert highlighted the diversity and richness of our repertoire.

We also expanded our reach with the Symphony @ the Snell series, where four free-to-attend concerts saw an impressive 91% attendance rate. These intimate performances provided an accessible and enriching musical experience. Our four Community Concerts, also free-to-attend and held in varied and unconventional venues such as Bo's Bar and Stage and the MAG, further demonstrated our commitment to making orchestral music accessible to everyone.

Our children's educational initiatives, Choir Kids and Music + Explorers, continued to flourish: thirteen schools participated in Choir Kids, while eight schools engaged with Music + Explorers. These programs not only foster a love for music among young students but also provide them with unique opportunities to perform with and learn from professional musicians.

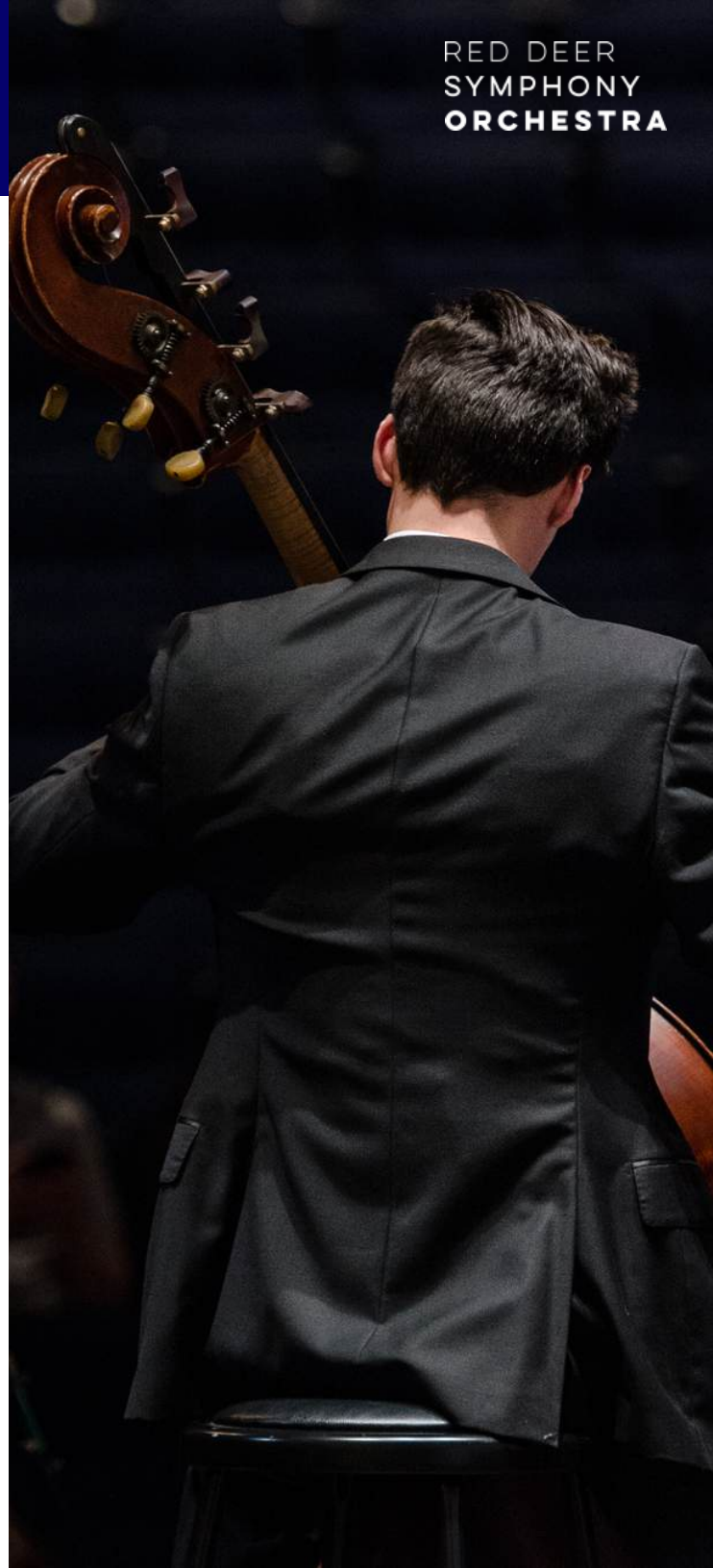
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The successes of this season would not have been possible without the unwavering support of our patrons, sponsors, volunteers, and the broader community. Your dedication and generosity have been the bedrock of our achievements, enabling us to continue our mission of enriching lives through music.

However, it is important to acknowledge the financial challenges we face. As the only symphony orchestra in Canada without municipal operational funding, we have had to navigate significant financial hurdles. Despite our best efforts and the incredible support from our donors, we continue to operate with a razor-thin budget and have been seeking sustainable funding to ensure our long-term viability. We are actively engaging with Red Deer City Council and exploring new partnerships to secure the necessary resources for our operational needs.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to our vision of building a vibrant, cultured community through the power of music. We are excited about the future and the many opportunities it holds for the RDSO. We will continue to innovate, expand our outreach, and deliver musical experiences that inspire and unite our community.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I extend my deepest appreciation to our exceptional musicians, our esteemed Music Director, Claude Lapalme, and our dedicated staff whose hard work, passion, and talent are the driving forces behind our success.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We were very sorry to accept the resignation of Jennette Miller, Executive Director, in late August. We will certainly miss Jennette's leadership and presence, but we respect her decision to pursue new opportunities and challenges. We are immensely thankful for the legacy she leaves behind and wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

We were also incredibly pleased to announce the appointment of Matthew Whitfield as our new Executive Director. Matthew has been with the RDSO for almost two years and has fully demonstrated his capability and commitment to take on this leadership role.

As we move forward, I invite you to stay engaged with the RDSO. Join us for our upcoming concerts, participate in our community events, and continue to support our mission. Together, we can ensure that the Red Deer Symphony Orchestra remains a cherished cultural institution for years to come.
Thank you for being an integral part of our journey.

With heartfelt gratitude,

ANITA THOMAS
PRESIDENT & BOARD CHAIR

CREATIVE PROGRAMMING

MUSIC DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

As Music Director of the Red Deer Symphony Orchestra (RDSO), it is my pleasure to reflect on the highlights and successes of the 2023-2024 season. This year has been a remarkable one, marked by artistic excellence, audience engagement, and community outreach.

ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENTS

This season, our programming sought to strike a balance between classical masterpieces and contemporary works, offering both our loyal patrons and new audience members an enriching musical experience. We opened the season conservatively with Smetana's *Moldau*, a popular and engaging piece that set the tone for an inspiring season. A piece of mine, *Dancing Phoenix* for string orchestra, was performed in November and we combined forces wit the Red Deer Royals for a Christmas concert.

Guest artists were a crucial part of the season's success. Notably, we welcomed new Red Deer resident, soprano Helen Hassinger, in an opera program that was rapturously received. Our principal trombone, Nikki McCaslin, demonstrated her virtuosity in the Larsson *Trombone Concertino*. Also, we witnessed the triumphant return of Rosa Barocca and cellist Elinor Frey. Her artistry captivated both musicians and audience alike, and we were thrilled by the positive reception. Our final concert was a John Williams extravaganza, which sold out months in advance.

MUSIC DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Building relationships within the community has always been a priority for the RDSO, and this season was no exception. We expanded our educational outreach programs, offering free concerts and school performances. Thousands of students have been reached through **Music + Explorers**, and our **Symphony @ the Snell** and **Community Concerts** were highly successful. **Choir Kids** also continued to grow post-COVID. Our goal with this program is to keep fostering a lifelong love of music in young generations, and this remains central to our mission.

LOOKING FORWARD

As we plan for the upcoming 2024-2025 season, we aim to continue offering a blend of beloved classical works and contemporary pieces that reflect our commitment to innovation and artistic growth. We will also be placing a strong emphasis on collaboration with local artists and organizations to further cement the RDSO's place in the heart of Red Deer's cultural landscape.

In closing, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to our musicians, board members, staff, volunteers, and, of course, our audience. Their support and dedication make everything we achieve possible. I would also like to acknowledge outgoing Executive Director Jennette Miller for her constant support, and welcome our incoming ED Matthew Whitfield, whose vision and leadership will doubtless match that of his predecessor!

Together, we are building something special, and I look forward to continuing this journey in the seasons ahead.

Respectfully submitted,

CLAUDE LAPALME
RDSO MUSIC DIRECTOR

2023-24 MAIN SERIES CONCERTS

The Red Deer Symphony Orchestra returned to the concert hall for its 37th year as central Alberta's flagship professional performing arts organization in October 2023. In this second post-pandemic season of six Main Series concerts, RDSO performed a broad range of music to an enthusiastic audience: it was a season to remember. From Smetana's *Ma Vlast* to the ubiquitous *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* and movie music masterpieces by John Williams, there was something for everyone, whether a classical music expert or a new audience member discovering this repertoire for the first time:

Main Series 1: Oktoberfest
Brahms: *Hungarian Dances 5 & 6*
Bloch: *Concerto Grosso No. 1*
Smetana: Die Moldau (from *Ma Vlast*)

Main Series 2: Dancing Phoenix (with Nikki McCaslin, trombone)
Lapalme: *Dancing Phoenix*
Grieg: *Holberg Suite*
Larsson: *Concertino for Trombone & String Orchestra*
Mozart: *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*

Main Series 3: Winter Wonderland (with Red Deer Royals Marching Show Band)
Assorted Holiday classics, arranged by RDSO Music Director Claude Lapalme and others.

2023-24 MAIN SERIES CONCERTS

Main Series 4: A Night at the Opera (with Helen Hassinger, soprano)
Rossini: Overture to *The Barber of Seville*
Puccini: Arias
Ricci: *Tarantella Napoletana*
Catalani: *Ebben? Ne andrò lontana*
Mozart: Arias
Respighi: *Gli Uccelli*

Main Series 5: Let's Cellobrate! (featuring Rosa Barocca and Elinor Frey)
Handel: *Concerto Grosso in F, Op. 6 No. 2*
Vivaldi: *Cello Concerto in G Major*
C.P.E. Bach: *Concerto in B-flat major; Sinfonia in B minor*

Main Series 6: May the Fourth Be With You
Assorted film music by John Williams, including *Jaws*, *Harry Potter*, *Star Wars*, *Indiana Jones*, *Schindler's List*, and *Jurassic Park*.

Main Series concerts are the primary means by which the RDSO fulfills our mission and mandate, presenting masterpieces from the classical music canon for an enthusiastic audience of subscribers, single ticket buyers, and community-based organizations. These performances provide central Alberta with unique musical experiences without the need for travel to Calgary or Edmonton, an opportunity that makes the RDSO a standalone and worthwhile fixture within Albertan culture.

TOTAL AUDIENCE NUMBERS FOR THE 2023-24 MAIN SERIES CONCERT SEASON WERE 2,976 OUT OF A POSSIBLE 3,354, WHICH EQUATES TO 89% OF TOTAL VENUE CAPACITY, UP FROM 87% IN 2022-23.

THE ATTENDANCE SUCCESS OF THE 2023-24 SEASON CONTINUES RDSO'S POST-PANDEMIC RECOVERY, DEMONSTRATING AN ENCOURAGING TREND OF CENTRAL ALBERTANS PRIORITIZING RDSO CONCERTS FOR THEIR DISCRETIONARY SPENDING DESPITE RISING COSTS OF LIVING AND A DIFFICULT ECONOMY.

CHOIR KIDS

RDSO's Choir Kids, a program that encourages musical creativity and expression in elementary school children, returned this spring for its 25th season! Each participating school submits two selections of choral music which are then arranged for orchestra by Music Director Claude Lapalme. Choir Kids 2024 took place on April 22 and May 6 at Gaetz United Memorial Church with three performances involving 13 schools and approximately 750 schoolchildren, as well as teachers, volunteers, and staff. These performances welcome the friends and family of the participants as well as our community at large, and approximately 1,600 people attended this year's performances.

Plans are underway for next season's Choir Kids, which is expected to increase both in enrolment and audience levels.

CHOIR KIDS WAS GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY:

JOAN DONALD
(In memory of Jack Donald)

THE CITY OF Red Deer

COMMUNITY CONCERTS

Community Concerts were a new RDSO initiative this season, providing high-quality musical programming in unique spaces, with little to no admission cost for the audience.

Concerts were presented at Bo's Bar & Stage (*Roll Over, Beethoven*), the Museum & Art Gallery (Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time*), Heritage Ranch (*Bach in the Barn*), and the Alberta Sports Hall of Fame (*Pop-Up Orchestra*).

All four performances were well attended and included a strong ratio of new to returning audience members. Each performance resulted in a number of positive ticket-buying behaviours, as individuals progressed from low-cost (i.e. low-risk), exploratory first-time concert attendees to paid Main Series attendees in a short period of time, demonstrating the value of the Community Concert series as a gateway to RDSO Main Series performances.

COMMUNITY CONCERTS WERE GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY:

THE CITY OF Red Deer

Canada

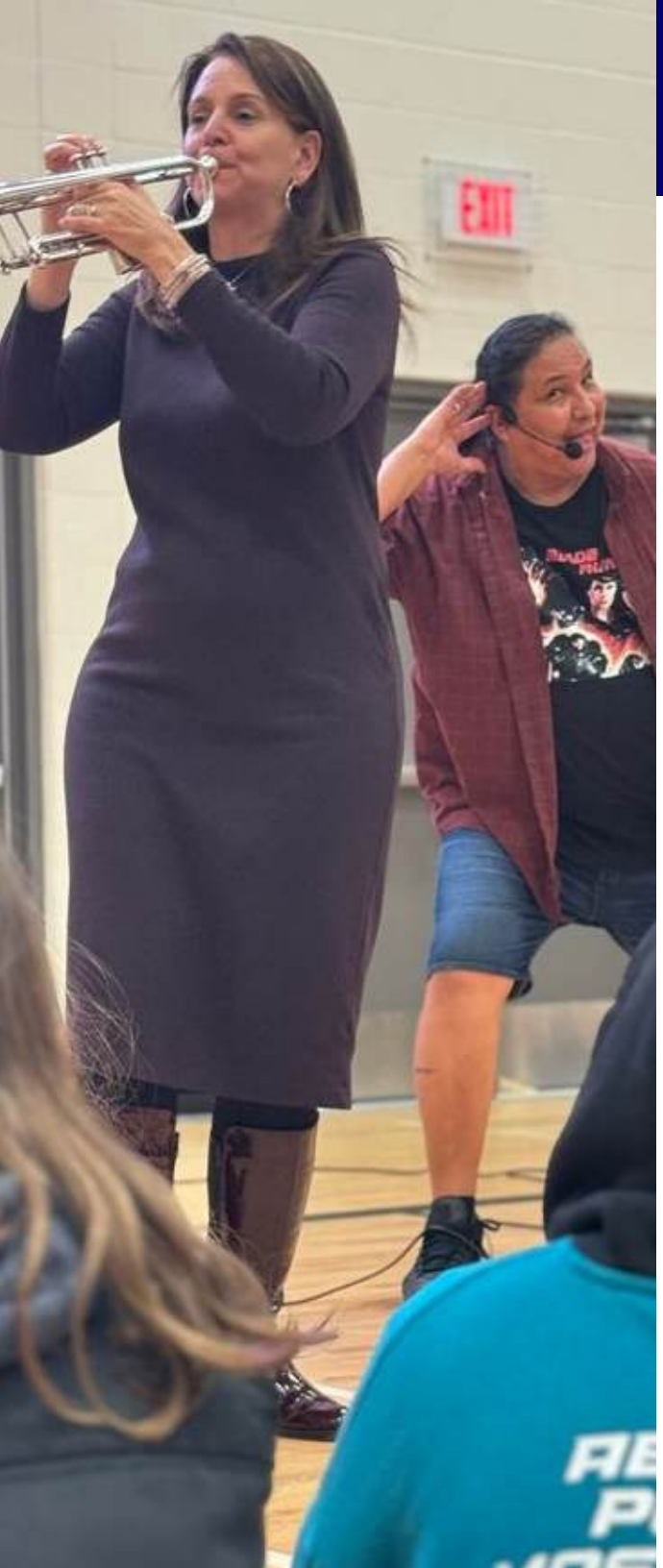
SYMPHONY @ THE SNELL

In 2019, RDSO launched a concert series entitled “Symphony @ the Snell,” delivered in partnership with the Red Deer Public Library. These community-oriented concerts included a double performance of Bruce Adolphe’s *Tough Turkey in the Big City*, a performance of songs and arias featuring soprano Helen Hassinger and pianist Matthew Whitfield, and The McKee Three in a concert of Pop and Jazz classics.

All three Symphony @ the Snell events were well-attended, attracted a diverse audience, and will be a core component of RDSO’s 2024-25 community programming.

SYMPHONY @ THE SNELL WAS GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY:

THE CITY OF Red Deer



MUSIC + EXPLORERS

Music + Explorers started as an after-school music enrichment program that worked with socio-economically challenged elementary school children. The program ran throughout the 2018 school year and was planned to begin again in the spring of 2020. Due to school closures during the pandemic, this program was not able to run and was put on hold indefinitely.

In 2023, Music + Explorers was re-introduced as a series of traveling in-school workshop sessions, led by RDSO artist-educators including Samantha Whelan-Kotkas, Walter MacDonald White Bear, Naomi Delafield, Janet Kuschak, and Claude Lapalme.

Local sessions were funded by the City of Red Deer, with educators visiting eight schools and over 850 local students participating. Music + Explorers was also offered to schools throughout Central Alberta with funding from the National Arts Centre, reaching six schools in five communities, with a total of 1,585 students in attendance.

MUSIC + EXPLORERS WAS GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY:

THE CITY OF Red Deer

NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE
CENTRE NATIONAL DES ARTS
Canada is our stage. Le Canada en scène.

OUR PEOPLE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The RDSO Board of Directors is an administrative Board that guides the organization by setting policy, financing RDSO's operations, providing oversight for staff, and leading the work of committees. Several new directors were elected to the RDSO Board in 2023.

The following individuals dedicated their time to fulfilling the responsibilities of the RDSO Board of Directors in 2023-24:

ANITA THOMAS, PRESIDENT
GAETANO MAZZUCA, VICE-PRESIDENT
VANESSA MARIANI, TREASURER
MARIE BUCHINSKI, DIRECTOR
KATHERINE BUCK, DIRECTOR
BRUCE HENKE, DIRECTOR
MORGAN MCKEE, DIRECTOR
LORRAINE SPROXTON, DIRECTOR

These individuals' efforts in working towards RDSO's success are much appreciated.

Additionally, the RDSO consults as needed with Evan Hardy, who acts as the organization's legal advisor. An annual review of RDSO's financial status for the 2023-24 fiscal year was completed by Cornish Harder Niederle LLP, supervised by David Niederle. The outcome of this process is the Review Engagement Report and Financial Statements presented as part of this report and at the Annual General Meeting each year.

The nominating committee has been actively recruiting, screening, and introducing several candidates to the RDSO Board of Directors for election at the 2024 Annual General Meeting.

COMMITTEES

The RDSO operated with an office staff of two full-time equivalent employees throughout 2023-24. As most orchestras of RDSO's size operate with a staff of three to five full-time staff, it is critical to the organization's ongoing ability to operate that the existing staff's work is augmented by the active, reliable participation of the committees and their volunteers.

RDSO's 2022-2025 Strategic Plan involved amendments to the existing committee structure; consequently, RDSO operated throughout the 2023-24 fiscal year with the following committees:

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

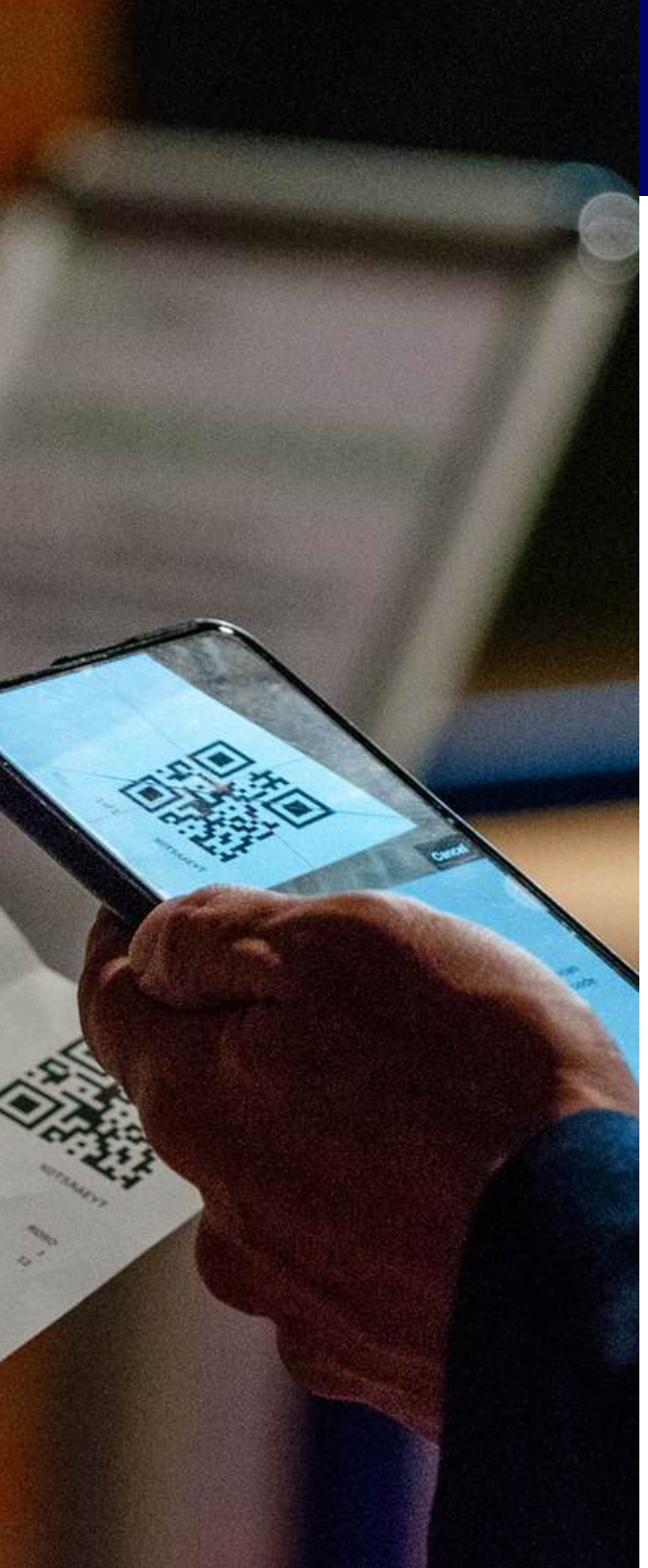
LEADERSHIP & ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

ARTISTIC VISION

FINANCE & FUND DEVELOPMENT

ORCHESTRA PLAYERS

UNION NEGOTIATION (AD-HOC)



VOLUNTEERS

By and large, the work of the organization is carried out by the volunteer efforts of many. Committees, events, concerts, and programs are made possible by the many, many hours given to the RDSO by our community of volunteers. Their commitment, talents, and ability to be our ambassadors is unparalleled.

Here are the people who helped carry out RDSO's mission behind the scenes:

MARIE BUCHINSKI
KATHERINE BUCK
ALEX CRIPPS
SHEILA CUNNINGHAM
DALE DICKAU
DE GALESLOOT
MAJA HAGEL
SHARI HANSON
EVAN HARDY
BRUCE HENKE
AUDREY HERMAN
CHANDRA KASTERN
JANET KUSCHAK
CLAUDE LAPALME
VANESSA MARIANI
GAETANO MAZZUCA
MORGAN MCKEE
DEBORAH OSHVALDA
RANDY PATMORE
MAE PRYMYCH
DIANA REED
BRENDA REID
KATHLEEN REID
DEBORAH RYCROFT
JAMIE SMITH
LORRAINE SPROXTON
LOIS TALLAS
ANITA THOMAS
ANGELA (DEE) THOMPSON
KENDRA WALKER

Please forgive us if we have inadvertently left you off of this list!

The RDSO regularly requires volunteers to assist with events such as Symphony @ the Snell, Choir Kids, Community Concerts, Main Series concerts, raffle ticket sales, mail-outs, and more.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, there is someone at the RDSO Office ready to speak with you!

SUBSCRIBERS

The RDSO returned to its standard membership model in 2022-23, changing the nomenclature from “member” to “subscriber”. This season continued flexible subscription options in addition to full-season tickets, enabling subscribers to select three- and four-concert packages that provided an additional level of flexibility and customization, resulting in 298 subscription sales in 2023, an increase from 247 subscribers in 2022.

Red Deer Polytechnic (formerly Red Deer College) continues to be a valued partner of the RDSO. This partnership is a result of both organizations working collaboratively towards best supporting the ability of RDSO to continue to serve our community, which includes RDP students. Mutually beneficial concessions with respect to venue use and student engagement were made in order to finalize a five-year partnership agreement between the RDSO and RDP that extends from 2022-2027. This agreement was amended in 2023 to allow RDSO to manage its own ticketing platform, increasing RDSO's ability to market concerts effectively and have direct contact with ticket buyers.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

COMMITTEE REPORTS

RDSO COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT - 2023/24

Purpose:

- Advocate for, and on behalf of, the organization.
- Develop, evaluate, and expand community outreach programming.
- Build relationships.
- Expand RDSO's profile and impact.

Goals for 2023/24:

- Advocate with Red Deer City Council to secure operational funding.
- Evaluate community outreach programming.

Advocacy:

The Committee implemented a strategic advocacy campaign with City Council, community organizations, audiences, and the public, communicating that:

1. The RDSO is financially vulnerable.
2. The RDSO is the only orchestra in Canada that does not receive operational funding from the municipality it serves.

In the past, RDSO received city operational funding through CCDF grants; however, the criteria changed in 2023 to only allow project funding. That loss of revenue, along with other reduced grants and sponsorships, has been a serious financial concern and impacted the resources available for Main Series productions.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

RDSO COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS COMMITTEE (CONTINUED)

Starting in the fall of 2023, the Committee wrote a series of letters to City Council and simultaneously met individually with Mayor Johnston and seven Councillors. We anticipate meeting with the final Councillor in September. The Executive Director prepared extensive supporting material including a PowerPoint presentation and related fact sheets to highlight the cultural and economic benefits the symphony brings to the City. The Executive Director also presented to the Red Deer Probus Club, and additional presentations are planned for the fall. Information has been made available to the audience at Main Series and community concerts. The Executive Director and Music Director participated in two media interviews that were subsequently published in RD News Now and the Red Deer Advocate, respectively.

Home • Local News

Red Deer Symphony is struggling with $24,000 loss of annual city funding

The Red Deer Symphony Orchestra is struggling financially for the second year without a city operating grant.

Lana Michelin
2 days ago

Elementary school choirs in Central Alberta are accompanied by the Red Deer Symphony at the Choir Kids event in this Advocate file photo.

At present, we are cautiously optimistic that City Council will favourably consider a resolution to provide operational funding in the 2025 city budget.

Community Outreach Programming:

An end-of-season audience survey was sent to 1,423 people; 24 responses were received (less than 2%). Of these, 19 were from Red Deer and five from surrounding communities. The comments were of interest: for example, many indicated an interest in attending a pre-concert talk. This will be considered in 2024/25.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

RDSO COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS COMMITTEE (CONTINUED)

Four ***Symphony at the Snell*** afternoon concerts were held, with an average attendance rate of 90%. The Red Deer Public Library is a great partnership for RDSO, helping to meet our strategic goal of being more accessible.

Five ***Community Concerts*** were held at Gaetz Memorial United Church, Bo's Bar and Stage, Heritage Ranch, the Red Deer Museum + Art Gallery, and the Alberta Sports Hall of Fame. Attendance was excellent, again filling approximately 90% of available seating. Feedback from the audience and musicians was very positive.

Choir Kids again generated many accolades from the schools, choir directors, and parents such as "great community building", and "awesome experience for students". The RDSO is seeking a larger venue for 2025.

The utilization of funded ***Seats for Students*** (28) and ***Music for Mental Health*** (14) has been a bit disappointing and RDSO will be reviewing the process of distributing the tickets in the upcoming season. It is possible that the tickets were overlooked and not distributed at times.

Three ***Open Rehearsals*** were available to the public last season. These "free to attend" opportunities are advertised to seniors' organizations and the Alberta Registered Music Teachers Association (ARMTA).

COMMITTEE REPORTS

RDSO COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS COMMITTEE (CONTINUED)

Overall Community Outreach programming helps meet our commitment for accessibility and attract a broader audience. In 2023/24 all community programming, except for Choir Kids, was “free to attend” and funded by community grants or donations. We anticipate this will continue, but will consider strategies to increase related donations in the future.

Respectfully submitted,

Anita Thomas
Chair, Community Connections Committee

COMMUNITY OF SUPPORTERS

SUPPORTERS

"Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success."
~ Henry Ford

The RDSO is fortunate to have garnered the support of many organizations, businesses, and individuals throughout Central Alberta. Without them, our accomplishments would pale in comparison to what they have been.

The following is a list of sponsors and donors that supported RDSO throughout the 2023-24 season:

GOLD ($10,000+)

NOVA CHEMICALS

SILVER ($5,000+)

ALLARD FOUNDATION
ATB WEALTH
SUNREAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT LTD.
ANN & KEVIN WASCHUK

BRONZE ($3,000+)

JOAN DONALD
GEORGE & ELAINE NYE

SUPPORTERS

CRESCENDO ($1,000+)

LISA BERRY
VIOLA BRAUN
BORDER PAVING
CIBC/JILLIAN LITTLE
WILLIAM & BETTY ANN GOLLY
SHIRLEY HOVAN
KATHY LACEY
RICHARD & DIANE MCDONELL
LARRY MELNYCHUK & ARDYTH OSEEN
DOROTHY & SANDY MURRAY
BARBARA SCHNEIDER & DARYL CASWELL
SERVUS CREDIT UNION
SWIFT INSURANCE & FINANCIAL SOLUTIONS LTD.

BRAVO ($400+)

ANONYMOUS
ANONYMOUS
JOSEPH HOPFNER
CAROL LOUNSBURY
LORRAINE SPROXTON
ANITA & GORDON THOMAS
JEN TURNER
LORNA WATKINSON-ZIMMER & DENNIS ZIMMER

SUPPORTERS

ENCORE ($200+)

ANONYMOUS
ROBERTA & RON BIEL
CALE CHAMBERS
BARBARA CORMACK
E JEAN FENNEL
ROBERT & CORALEA FORBES
MARY GARDINER
DENYSE HAZLETT
CHANDRA KASTERN
KAREN MALCOLM
VANESSA MARIANI
TEENY MCCLOY
MAVIS MENZIES
JENNETTE MILLER
ARUN MISHRA
JUDY ROBINS WEIR
CARLEEN SHIGEMATSU
JOAN SIMPSON

MEDIA

106.7 REWIND
BIG 105.5 FM
PATTISON MEDIA
RD NEWS NOW
RED DEER ADVOCATE

APPLAUSE (UP TO $199)

ANONYMOUS
ANONYMOUS
ANONYMOUS
ANONYMOUS
ANONYMOUS
ANONYMOUS
ANONYMOUS
ANONYMOUS
ANONYMOUS
ANONYMOUS
COLLEEN BARLUND
CARLOS EDUARDO BARTUCCI
TRISTA BEAMISH
RHONDA & KEITH BOHLKEN
MARLIES BOOTH
RICHARD BOTTOMLEY
LACEY BURRAGE
BEVERLEY & LAWRENCE CARR
MARION DAMIANI
GLENDA DEBOER-LONSDALE
SANDRA DEER
BERTHA FORD
TREVOR HADDOCK
HAIDY HANNA
FRANCES HARE

SUPPORTERS

APPLAUSE (UP TO $199) - CONTINUED

PATRICIA HEFFEL
JOAN JEWKES
BRYAN JOHNSON
CINDY KLAUDT
LOUISE LAPALME
CAROLYN LEWIS
MARLENE LINNEBERG
SUSAN MAGUIRE
RORY MAXWELL
KAREN MILLER
DEBORAH OSHVALDA
KEANNA PARKER
RANDY PATMORE
DEBBIE PEREPELITZA
TIM PINSENT
BRENDA REID
KATHLEEN REID
RON ROSE
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GREG SEARLES
RON SOEHN
JANISE SOMER
BARB SUTTER
ROSALIE THON
CHRIS UPSDELL
DAVE VIERGUTZ
LAUREN VISSER
TERRI WACHTER
GERRY WINIA
CARYL YARMCHUK

GIFT IN KIND

BO'S BAR & STAGE
BROWN'S SOCIAL HOUSE
CANADIAN BREWHOUSE
CENTURY 21 ADVANTAGE
CITY OF RED DEER
FLORAL EXPRESSIONS
GAETZ MEMORIAL UNITED CHURCH
HERITAGE RANCH
JOYPOP ART
MCKEE MUSIC & SOUND
MINUTEMAN PRESS
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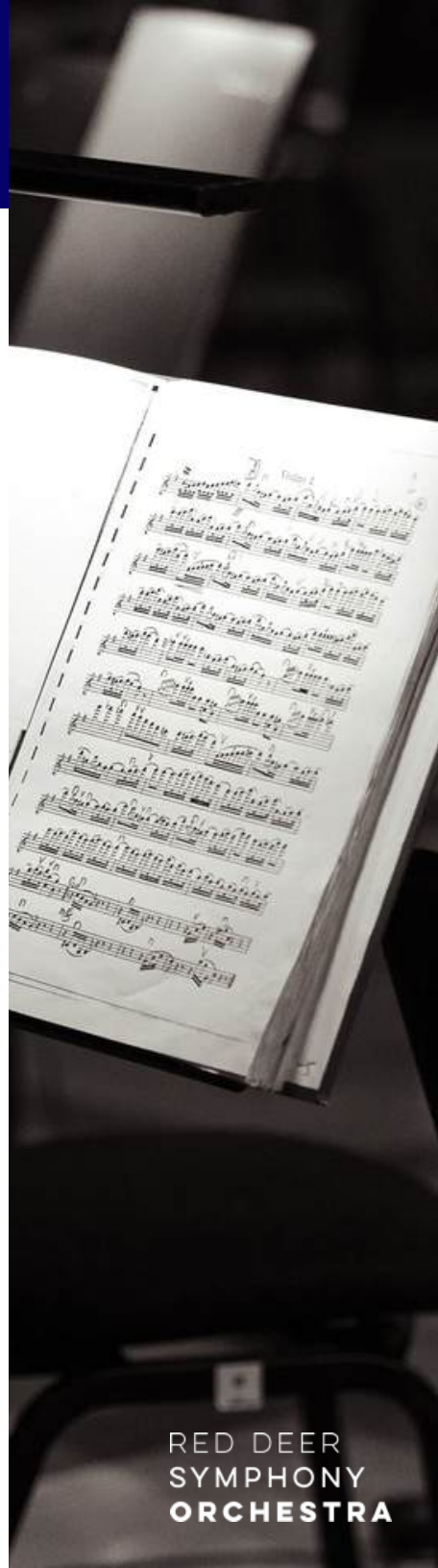
REACTION DIGITAL
ROSEBUD COUNTRY INN
ROSEBUD THEATRE
SCHNELL HARDY JONES LLP
SECOND CUP COFFEE
STATE AND MAIN
SUNREAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT LTD.
VOYAGER ART AND TILE

Please note that this listing encompasses support received June 1, 2023 – May 31, 2024. Together, we continue to make amazing symphonic music and education happen in Central Alberta! We try our best to ensure this list is accurate and complete. If we have failed to recognize your support or have acknowledged you or your donation incorrectly, we apologize and ask that you contact the RDSO office so that we may correct our records.



GRANTS

The RDSO continues to receive federal funding from the Canada Council for the Arts. Due to Canada Council's revised schedule of upcoming core grant competition dates due to pandemic impacts, the current grant cycle (normally three years) has been extended for an additional two years. 2024 marks the **first** year of this two-year funding cycle extension. In 2023-2024, under its Engage & Sustain grant program, Canada Council for the Arts provided $23,500 in funding to support the operations of the RDSO, consistent with the previous year.

Provincially, the RDSO received $52,038 in 2023-24 from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts (AFA) to support operations. 2023-24 marked the first year of a three-year funding cycle (2023-2025) for operating funds from the AFA. AFA funding is contingent on community-derived revenue (CDR), and therefore RDSO's ticket revenue, sponsorship, and donations affect funding for the next cycle. Consequently, a significant funding decrease was feared in the 2023-25 funding cycle due to the stark decrease in ticket revenue, sponsorships, and donations seen throughout 2020-2022. Fortunately, AFA capped CDR-related impacts to a maximum of 5%; the 2023-2025 funding cycle will therefore continue at $52,038.00 per year but is expected to increase in 2026 if ticketing success continues in the next two seasons.

Canada Council for the Arts
Conseil des arts du Canada

Alberta Foundation for the Arts

GRANTS

In 2023, the RDSO successfully applied for a grant from the Government of Canada's Community Services Recovery Fund, administered through the Community Foundation of Central Alberta (formerly Red Deer & District Community Foundation). This $69,000 grant was utilized to develop marketing-specific organizational strategies that would provide the RDSO with a collection of knowledge, skills, and materials that utilize innovative promotional methods to build relationships and reach new audiences in previously untapped sectors of the community.

To accomplish this, the RDSO worked with Reaction Digital, which conducted market-based audience demographic research and provided updated marketing assets, as well as one-on-one training sessions with the Marketing & Community Connections Coordinator. This grant funding was also used to design and purchase updated marketing materials including signage, tablecloths, and other items that will provide a more appealing and cohesive image for the RDSO at Main Series concerts and other public events.

Funded by the
Government of Canada's
Community Services Recovery Fund | Canada

GRANTS

2023 marked the first year in a three-year funding cycle through the City of Red Deer's Community Culture Development Fund program. The RDSO utilized $20,000 for Community Concerts and $12,000 for Symphony @ the Snell. $8,000 in deferred grant revenue from a previous cycle was utilized to support the delivery of Music + Explorers, and $15,000 was received for Choir Kids under a two-year funding cycle.

As mentioned in the 2022-23 Annual Report, RDSO submitted applications for the 2023-2025 cycle that were consistent with its 2019-2022 applications; however, only two of four applications were successful due to a change in CCDF funding specifications that no longer allow operational expenses to be eligible. As such, RDSO currently does not receive any operational funding from the City of Red Deer.

Canadian Heritage & RDSO Legacy Funds are held and administered by the Community Foundation of Central Alberta (formerly RDDCF), of which RDSO is the designated beneficiary. As of December 31, 2023, the Lapalme Legacy Fund market value was $134,287.23 (2022 - $128,188, 2021 - $155,149, 2020 - $151,199; 2019 - $142,261) and the Canadian Arts Heritage Sustainability Program Fund market value was $84,705.72 (2022 - $80,858.28 (2021 - $97,865 2020 - $95,373; 2019 - $89,736).

As a beneficiary of these funds, in 2023 the RDSO received annual disbursements of net income earned totaling $5,919.80 for the Lapalme Legacy Fund and $3,734.09 from The Canadian Arts Heritage Sustainability Program.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The financial position for the Red Deer Symphony Orchestra in 2023-24 continued to reflect the uncertainty of large-scale musical performance in a post-pandemic environment. This season did see a significant increase in revenue to $526,058 from $395,799 in 2022-23, reflective of community support for live performances, generous In-Kind donations, and the significant CSRF grant previously mentioned. However, sponsorship revenue fell well short of budgeted expectations, and the revenue stream previously represented by CCDF operational funding could not be replaced, impacting the organization's bottom line at the end of the fiscal year.

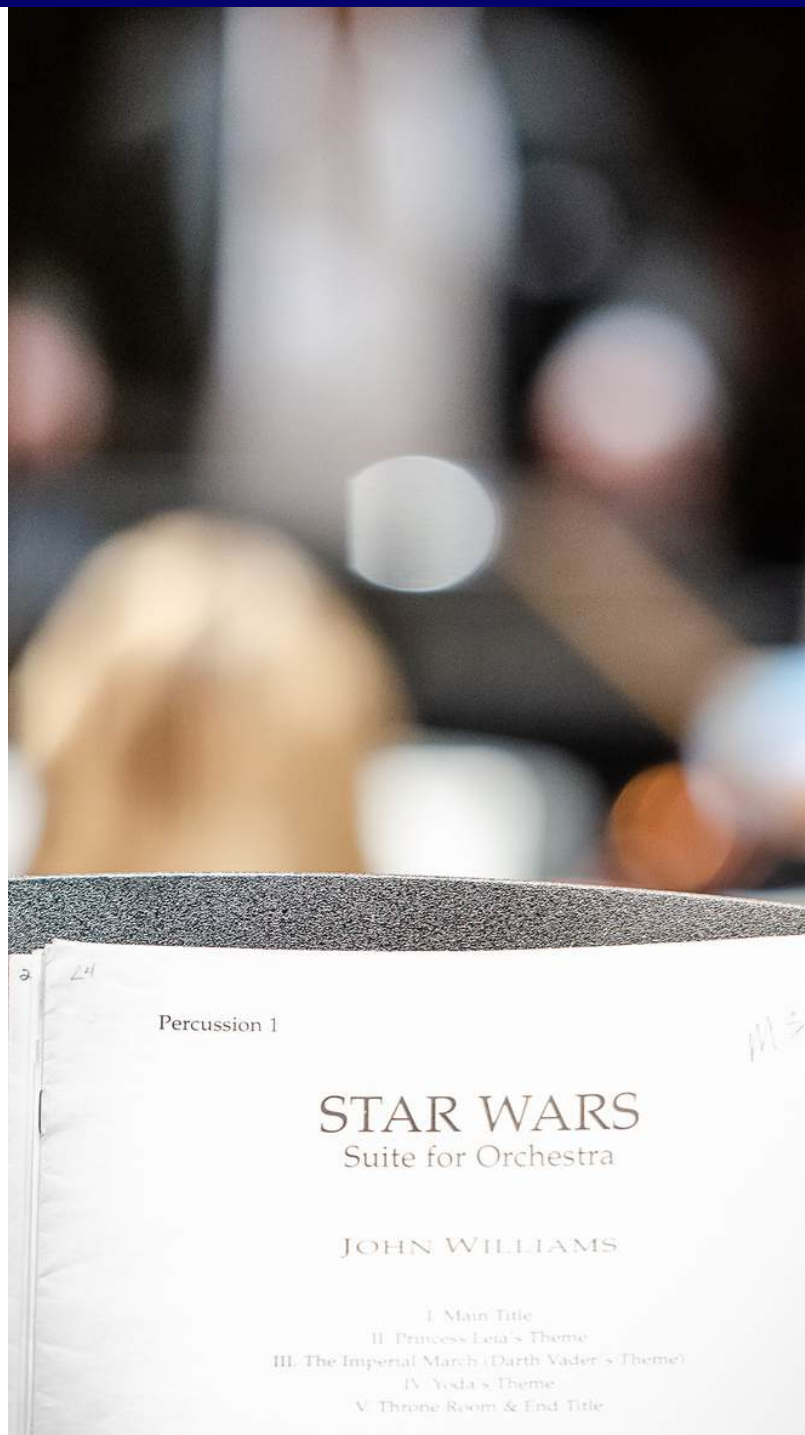
Production and program-related expenses rose to a total of $341,182 (up from $314,615 in 2022-23). Administrative expenses increased significantly in 2023-24, totaling $203,292 ($113,571 the year previous); this is due to a number of external factors, including rising costs due to inflation, and the addition of the $69,000 CSRF grant, which caused a sharp increase in advertising expenses that will return to baseline in 2024-25. The fiscal year ended with the RDSO reporting a deficit of revenues over expenditures of -$14,801, which is an increase from a deficit of -$31,196 the year previous.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

RDSO's long-term sustainability continues to be an ongoing concern due to the difficult post-pandemic economic conditions Central Alberta is experiencing, exacerbating an already recessive economy. The continued efforts of the Board in advocacy and fundraising, and the staff's continued exploration of additional revenue sources remains critical for the RDSO's ability to exist in our community for years to come.

Secure municipal operational funding is crucial to maintaining RDSO's stability long-term. With the complete cessation of municipal operating funding in 2022-23, as well as the inability to meet 2023-24 budget targets in generating sponsorship revenue, increased engagement from the Board of Directors and community will be essential in the 2024-25 season.

For more information on the RDSO's operational funding advocacy campaign, please refer to the Community Connections Committee Report above.



GOING FORWARD

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-25

Embarking on a revival mission, RDSO applied for and received funding from the Rozsa Foundation to complete an updated 2022-25 Strategic Plan. The RDSO worked with Finley & Associates to complete this project throughout 2021-22, with 2022-23 marking the first season of implementation.

VALUES

Values are fundamental principles and beliefs that serve as implicit criteria guiding all actions and decision-making.

RDSO'S VALUES:

Community Leadership
Diversity
Creativity
Resiliency
Collaborative
Local

ROZSA FOUNDATION

FINLEY + ASSOCIATES
STRATEGY. ACTION. IMPACT.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-25

VISION

The vision states the desired future state.

RDSO'S VISION:

Igniting passion for arts and culture in Central Alberta.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- "Let go of the ordinary"
- Ignite passion for arts and culture in Central Alberta
- Leader in community building through music in Central Alberta
- Help to facilitate the growth of performing arts in Central Alberta

MISSION

The mission communicates the distinctive identity or purpose the Red Deer Symphony Orchestra seeks.

RDSO'S MISSION:

A community-oriented professional performing arts leader dedicated to engaging, educating, and inspiring Central Alberta through music.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Embedded in the community
- Largest professional performing arts organization in Central Alberta
- Positioned to leverage arts organizations
- Outreach
- Educational experiences

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STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-25

GOALS

Goals are ideal states to be achieved some time in the future.

RDSO'S GOALS:

1. Re-imagine the role of a symphony orchestra in community building.
2. Collaborate, curate, and create classical music experiences.
3. Foster career pathways for local professional musicians through community connection and mentorship.
4. Foster and inspire a vibrant arts and culture sector in Central Alberta.
5. Contribute to making Central Alberta a great place to live.
6. Deliver accessible and diverse performances, support music education, establish strategic partnerships, and build engagement through Central Alberta.
7. Be operationally sustainable (i.e., human, financial, and cultural).

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STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-25

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Key Success Factors (KSFs) are conditions that when properly maintained or managed, significantly impact the organization's ability to achieve its vision. RDSO has identified several Key Success Factors:

1. Artistic Vision
2. Community Engagement
3. Community Leadership
4. Organizational Networks
5. Infrastructure
6. Evidence-driven
7. Local

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KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS IN 2023-24

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are measures used to gauge performance against the Goals and Key Success Factors. The following is a summary of 2022-23 as per the RDSO's Key Performance Indicators.

1. TOTAL PERFORMANCES:

Main Series 1 - Oktoberfest: 3 services; 2 rehearsals, 1 performance
Main Series 2 - Dancing Phoenix: 3 services; 2 rehearsals, 1 performance
Main Series 3 - Winter Wonderland: 2 services; 1 rehearsal, 1 performance
Main Series 4 - A Night at the Opera: 4 services; 3 rehearsals, 1 performance
Main Series 5 - Let's Cellobrate: 1 performance
Main Series 6 - May the Fourth: 2 services; 1 rehearsal, 1 performance

2. PERFORMANCE REVENUE

Sponsorship, project funding, subscriptions, and single ticket.
Budget vs. actual per concert:

MAIN SERIES CONCERT	BUDGET	ACTUAL
Oktoberfest	$ 26,499.67	$ 15,931.69
Dancing Phoenix	$ 24,299.67	$ 22,328.89
Winter Wonderland	$ 28,999.67	$ 25,649.77
A Night at the Opera	$ 25,499.67	$ 25,952.14
Let's Cellobrate!	$ 24,299.67	$ 26,393.64
May the Fourth Be With You	$ 25,499.67	$ 25,013.89

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS IN 2023-24

3. PERFORMANCE EXPENSES

Budget vs. actual per concert:

MAIN SERIES CONCERT	BUDGET	ACTUAL
Oktoberfest	$ 31,556.00	$ 26,675.48
Dancing Phoenix	$ 14,045.00	$ 13,360.25
Winter Wonderland	$ 24,228.00	$ 24,038.62
A Night at the Opera	$ 21,178.00	$ 20,569.63
Let's Cellobrate!	$ 23,132.00	$ 10,155.97
May the Fourth Be With You	$ 20,513.00	$ 30,659.77

4. TOTAL AUDIENCE

Main Series 1: 265 subscriptions; 58 single tickets; 84 complimentary = 407 (Total)
Main Series 2: 277 subscriptions; 101 single tickets; 85 complimentary = 463 (Total)
Main Series 3: 274 subscriptions; 199 single tickets; 85 complimentary = 558 (Total)
Main Series 4: 258 subscriptions; 159 single tickets; 85 complimentary = 502 (Total)
Main Series 5: 273 subscriptions; 170 single tickets; 44 complimentary = 487 (Total)
Main Series 6: 291 subscriptions; 188 single tickets; 80 complimentary = 559 (Total)

TOTAL LIVE CONCERT AUDIENCE = 2,976

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS IN 2023-24

5. INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS

Cash donations in 2023-24 totaled **$37,673**, slightly over the **$37,500** budgeted for the year. This figure does not include in-kind contributions or concert sponsorships.

6. SPECIAL EVENTS & FUNDING PROJECTS

Revenue/expense vs budget per event/project:

The RDSO Office launched a Crowdfunding Campaign, Sustain Your Symphony, on April 25, 2024. By August 31, 2024, this campaign generated $15,835 and received matching funding of $5,000 from the Government of Alberta. The full effect of this increase in cash donations will be reflected in RDSO's 2024-25 Review Engagement.

7. SPONSORS (CORPORATE & FOUNDATIONS)

Revenue/expense vs budget per event/project:

ALL AREAS SUMMARY	BUDGET	ACTUAL
Season Sponsor	$ 10,000	$ 0
Concert Sponsors	$ 30,000	$ 20,000
Open Rehearsals	$ 0	$ 0
Choir Kids	$ 3,000	$ 3,000
Seats for Students	$ 3,000	$ 3,000
Music for Mental Health	$ 3,000	$ 3,000
Total	**$ 49,000**	**$ 29,000**

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS IN 2023-24

8. MUNICIPAL / REGIONAL REVENUE – CITY OF RED DEER

It is notable that City of Red Deer funding is issued on the calendar year. A total of $47,000 was received in 2023, increased from $32,000 in 2022 due to the addition of $15,000 in Choir Kids funding under the CCDF grant.

Despite this increased project funding, operations continue to be ineligible for City of Red Deer funding, resulting in a $24,000 budgetary shortfall.

SOURCE - CITY OF RED DEER	BUDGET	ACTUAL
Operations	$ 24,000	$ 0
Community Concerts	$ 20,000	$ 20,000
Symphony @ the Snell	$ 12,000	$ 12,000
Choir Kids	$ 8,000	$ 15,000
Total	**$ 64,000**	**$ 47,000**

9. FEDERAL / PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION REVENUE

SOURCE	BUDGET	ACTUAL
Canada Council for the Arts	$ 23,500	$ 23,500
Alberta Foundation for the Arts	$ 55,038	$ 55,038
Total	**$ 78,538**	**$ 78,538**

SO WHAT, NOW WHAT?

A key part of meeting the goals laid out in the strategic plan are the RDSO's priorities over a three year period. In order to efficiently work on the strategic priorities, the RDSO has developed and acted on the following:

IMPLEMENTATION PLANS 2022-2025

Strategic Priority #1: Long-term planning for people

Building Leadership Capacity within RDSO

- Develop a Board Recruitment Strategy, including updating the Skills Matrix
- Develop a Board Chair Recruitment Plan
- Develop a Committee Member Recruitment Strategy
- Introduce a Board Evaluation and develop a 2-year Action Plan to address performance gaps

Develop a Succession Plan for the Music Director and Executive Director

- Short-term illness
- Long-term illness
- Planned retirement
- Untimely departure

Continue to strengthen the capacity and infrastructure of the organization

- Develop high-level action plans for board committees
- Diversity revenue mix

SO WHAT, NOW WHAT?

Strategic Priority #2: Grow Community Connection

Re-orient the RDSO to reach a broader community

- Undertake further analysis of Comparators and Competitors
- Develop a Segmentation Hypothesis of current and potential audiences
- Conduct market research to identify who RDSO is attracting and not attracting but could
- Develop a strategy to draw people in from YYC and YEG
- Explore ways to rebrand that would allow RDSO to better reflect its desired position in Central Alberta

Identify and prioritize strategic partnerships that grow financial support for the RDSO

- Develop a Membership Strategy
- Develop a Donor/Sponsorship Strategy
- Develop a Volunteer Management Strategy

Diversify programming to target core and growth audience segments

- Rethink timing/length of season
- Develop a Signature Venue programming strategy (e.g., Red Deer Polytechnic Arts Centre - Red Deer; Lougheed Centre - Camrose; Gaetz Memorial United Church - Red Deer)
- Explore unique venue opportunities for the RDSO

Develop an Education Outreach Strategy

- Within schools
- Within new communities in Central Alberta (e.g., Paintearth)

Prepare an Economic Impact Study/benefits that the RDSO can demonstrate to the City of Red Deer and other Counties

- Advocate for the importance of the RDSO to the Central Alberta community

SO WHAT, NOW WHAT?

Strategic Priority #3: Grow Musician talent pool within Central Alberta

Identify and prioritize strategic partnerships that extend the professional music talent pool in Central Alberta

- Develop a partnership strategy that networks with Central Alberta music festivals
- Develop a partnership strategy that engages music teachers in Central Alberta (e.g., Alberta Registered Music Teachers Association)
- Identify local rehearsal venue(s) within Red Deer

Proactively recruit 'local' musicians from Central Alberta (i.e., within 80 km radius of Red Deer)

- Formalize long-term recruitment strategy for musicians
- Establish long-term recruitment targets to increase representation from Central Alberta
- Explore opportunities to establish a musician recruitment strategy with post-secondary institutions offering music performance degrees/credentials within Central Alberta

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE VISUAL IDENTITY AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR THE RED DEER SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA HAS BEEN SUPPORTED BY FUNDING FROM THE ALBERTA FEDERATION FOR THE ARTS, THE ROSZA FOUNDATION, AND THE CITY OF RED DEER.

THANK YOU FOR BELIEVING IN THE WORK WE DO AND THE CULTURAL VALUE WE BRING TO THE COMMUNITY!

Alberta Foundation for the Arts

ROZSA FOUNDATION

THE CITY OF Red Deer

In the spirit of reconciliation, Red Deer Symphony Orchestra acknowledges the privilege of planning, practicing, and performing on Treaty 7 land, the traditional territory of the Blackfoot, Tsuu T'ina, and Stoney Nakoda peoples. We also serve communities across central Alberta, which covers Treaty 6, traditional Cree, Métis, and Saulteaux territory.