



# 2016 2017

 Arts  
Commons

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

## Message from the Chair

# Henry Sykes

### *Chair of the Board - 2012 -2017*

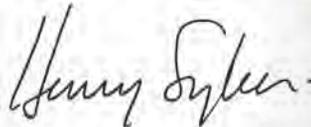
It has been almost ten years since I joined the Board of Arts Commons, the last five of which I have served as Chair of the Board. I initially joined the board because it was, and remains, my passionate belief that a great city is more than an accumulation of buildings and businesses. For a city to be truly great, it needs, among other things, a vibrant and thriving cultural and arts community. It needs people who want to be there because it's a city in which they want to spend their lives, and raise families, and connect with other people on many different levels. Just as a house is not always a home, a city is not always a community. Reflecting on the years I have spent on the Board of Arts Commons, I am enormously proud of the role Arts Commons has played - and continues to play - in making our city a community. Our reach - whether through our programming, our education outreach or our community events - continues to grow, and our impact continues to deepen. I am especially pleased that we have accomplished this, and so much more, while balancing our books and creating a sustainable business,

notwithstanding the very difficult economic times we have endured over the last many years. It is when the going gets tough that Calgarians excel, and Arts Commons is a perfect example.

The Board of Arts Commons has a robust succession planning process, and as a result, I have complete confidence in the leadership of our new chair, Scott Hutcheson. I want to thank him, and all of the members of our Board, for their support, their wisdom, and their guidance over so many years. I also want to thank our CEO, Johann Zietsman, who has built an exceptional team of committed and extraordinarily competent leaders. We are very fortunate to have such a group of people in our City.

I leave my position knowing that Arts Commons is not only in good hands, but it is in the best hands.

It has been a privilege.



**Henry W. Sykes, Q.C.**  
Chair, Board of Directors





© Mike Tan

National Geographic Live Explorer and Photographer Anand Varma, meets with patrons to sign autographs. © Will Young



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Special event in the Jack Singer Concert Hall lobby.



Patrons create their own personal pieces of art at Happenings 9.

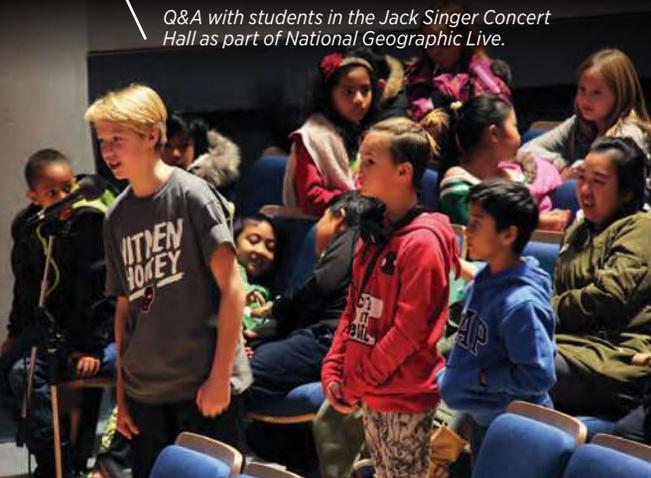
**Our Vision:**  
A creative and  
compassionate  
society, inspired  
through the arts.

**Our Mission:**  
To bring the arts  
...to life.

# This is **YOUR** Arts Commons



Q&A with students in the Jack Singer Concert Hall as part of National Geographic Live.



Indigenous supergroup Black Arm Band performs at Jack Singer Concert Hall as part of BD&P World Music and the High Performance Rodeo. © Will Young



## This is Where the Arts Come to Life!

"It was the best of times... it was the worst of times." The economic downturn took its toll on key industries, shutting down several businesses, and many arts organizations faced extraordinary challenges. Although Arts Commons also faced challenging economic times, we are pleased that we were able to continue to bring the excitement, inspiration, and renewal of the arts to the people who walked through our doors, when they needed it most.

In addition to bringing world renowned artists and award-winning productions to our stages, we continued to create accessible opportunities for our community by hosting free public events and providing complimentary tickets to those who would otherwise be unable to attend. Over the season, we hosted hundreds at our free *Happenings* events and distributed complimentary show tickets to over 1,700 people, with nearly 900 of those allocated to families and children. Arts Commons Presents engaged over 10,000 students in Arts Learning programs and hosted over 8,000 students at *National Geographic Live* education events.

We shared the excellence of performers such as Mavis Staples and Ludovico Einaudi, and engaged with artists like Black Arm Band, who came all the way from Australia and shared their heritage with Indigenous students here in Calgary. In this way, we bring the arts to every life and remain grateful for the ongoing support of our patrons, donors, and sponsors. Without you, none of this would be possible.

On behalf of Arts Commons and our community, I wish to thank our outgoing Chair, Henry Sykes, for his passion, dedication, leadership, and generosity over the past decade – we wish Henry well in his new endeavours! Thanks also goes out to our resident companies, community partners, artists, volunteers, media, and all three levels of Government, for your continued commitment to the arts.

The following pages tell the story of both Arts Commons as a whole, including our seven resident companies, partners, and third parties, as well as the specific contribution of Arts Commons' operations and Arts Commons Presents programming.

Thank you for continuing on this journey with us. We continue to welcome you to share your passion with us and are grateful for your role in our success.

**Johann F. Zietsman**  
President and CEO



## Our Mandate is...

# to foster, present, and promote the arts

From trombones to ukuleles, hair salons to chocolate factories, comedians to world-renowned explorers, the 2016-17 season delivered excitement, inspiration, laughter, and passion at a time when our community needed it most. Arts Commons Presents hosted globally respected musicians, including pianist Ludovico Einaudi, viral sensation Jake Shimabukuro, and blues legend Charlie Musselwhite; Theatre Calgary immersed us in different cultures with the production of *A Thousand Splendid Suns*; Alberta Theatre Projects invited us into a polygamist community with *Gracie*; the Calgary International Children's Festival brought imagination, excitement, and the wonder of the arts

to over 60,000 students, teachers, and families; Downstage took us on a musical journey of murder with *Crime Does Not Pay*; the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra swept us away to the great beyond with their *Sci-Fi Spectacular: Star Wars to Star Trek*; and One Yellow Rabbit celebrated 30 years, entralling us once again with the variety and power of the High Performance Rodeo.

And those are just a few of the highlights!

Arts Commons is honoured to be able to share these moments and present incredible talent, thereby enriching and inspiring the lives of Calgarians.



David Coulter and Ensemble in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*.  
© Kevin Berne



Students and teachers at Kidsfest enjoy a presentation of *Jacky's African Village* in the Big Secret Theatre. © Kelly Hofer



*“So impressed with the energy, quality and ambiance. An amazing evening!”*

- Patron

# 408,984

total attendance  
to a ticketed event  
at Arts Commons



ALBERTA THEATRE PROJECTS

Arts Commons  
Presents



THE CALGARY  
INTERNATIONAL  
CHILDREN'S  
FESTIVAL

Calgary  
Philharmonic  
*Orchestra*

**DOWNSTAGE** THEATRE THAT CREATES  
CONVERSATION



*theatre:*  
**CALGARY**



*Selina Wong, Lennette Randall,  
Devin MacKinnon, André Wickenheiser,  
David Rhymer, and Kris Demeanor in  
Crime Does Not Pay. © Tim Nguyen*



*Ludovico Einaudi back stage  
with Founders Circle members.  
© Will Young*

## Our Mandate is...

# to provide and care for our assets

Arts Commons is proud to be the custodian of Alberta's largest and most comprehensive performing arts facility. Within the walls of our building are five theatres, a world-renowned concert hall, arts education spaces, costume and set building shops, rehearsal spaces, visual arts galleries, a café, and administrative offices for some of the most ground breaking and accomplished performing arts companies in Calgary. Arts Commons makes it a priority to maintain, as well as enhance our facility to the highest possible standard, from seating and lighting, to backstage rigging and increased patron accessibility.

The five year plan for patron experience improvement came to its conclusion during the 2016-17 season as the Jack Singer Concert Hall was completely renovated with new seating, pillar and audience lighting, and floor finishing

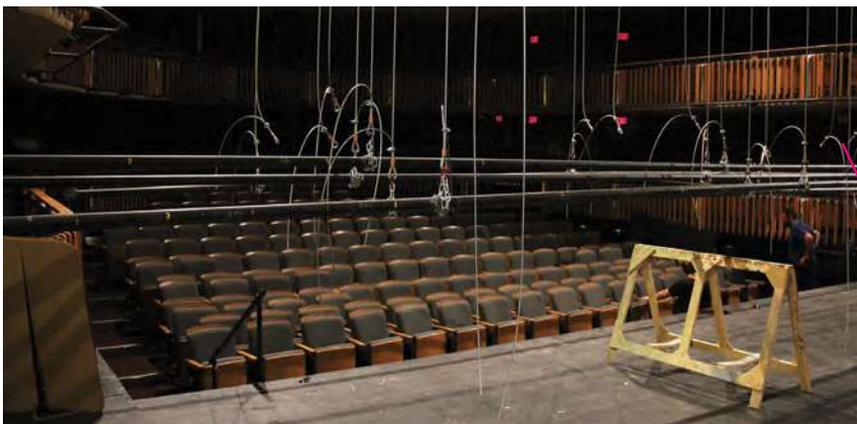
throughout the space. Supported by The City of Calgary through the Capital Civic Partners Grant Program, the Calgary Foundation, and the Government of Canada through The Canadian Heritage - Canada Cultural Spaces Fund, 2,057 seats were replaced with new, Canadian manufactured, acoustically balanced seating.

To improve the accessibility of our performances for all our patrons, the hearing assistance technology was also upgraded in each of our venues, including the Big Secret and Engineered Air Theatres, which previously did not have support for hearing assistance. We also improved seating accessibility in the Jack Singer Concert Hall for patrons with physical impairments.

Behind the scenes, the rigging in the Martha Cohen Theatre and Jack Singer

Concert Hall was upgraded for increased safety. Cracked and worn outflow pipes throughout the building were also replaced to aid with effective water and sewage drainage. In the HVAC system, the largest coils in the city were replaced, significantly increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the cooling system throughout the building. Additionally, since 2015, Arts Commons has been working to replace all of the toilets, faucets, and much of our plumbing with efficient, water saving fixtures that have not only greatly decreased our water consumption building-wide, but also improved the sanitary cleanliness of our facilities through autosensing technology.

From the infrastructure that keeps our building running at high efficiency, to the comfort of our patrons, Arts Commons strives to maintain and constantly improve on the assets in our care.



*Rigging in the Martha Cohen Theatre.*  
© Alex Bonyun



**2,057**  
seats were replaced  
in the Jack Singer  
Concert Hall

*New seats being installed in the Jack Singer Concert Hall.*



*Building Operator Jason Nieskens stands beside the new cooling coil installed in the Arts Commons air circulation system. © Alex Bonyun*

**8,798,380**  
litres of water  
were saved with  
Arts Commons'  
new water efficient  
plumbing fixtures



## Our Mandate is...

# to ensure optimal access and utilization of our assets

Arts Commons is a space for all; to gather, to feel welcomed, and to be part of our artistic community. Our volunteer community is strong and active, with increasing affinity towards the organization. This year, 1,724 volunteers contributed 23,599 hours of service to Arts Commons and its resident companies. In addition, thousands of visitors came through our doors to have lunch, grab a coffee, and peruse the art galleries.

Downstage Performance Theatre became the first resident company in Arts Commons to participate in the Good Host program;

hosting relaxed performances to allow those with sensory sensitivities to enjoy and participate in the arts. Arts Commons continues to work diligently to create maximum accessibility for the many events, performances, and speaker presentations that take place in the building.

We also welcomed non-profits, community groups, corporations, private functions, and special projects to be created within our walls, filling our spaces and reducing “dark days”, keeping the space vibrant and the organization sustainable.

An integral part of our success is through our venue rentals. We are thrilled that our community feels at home at Arts Commons; hosting their weddings, holiday parties, town hall meetings, and a variety of other celebrations.

*The Honourable Rachel Notley, Premier of Alberta speaks in the Jack Singer Concert Hall lobby.*  
© Alex Bonyun



**1,724**  
volunteers engaged

**23,599**  
volunteer hours  
contributed



*Arts Commons volunteer Ana distributes magazines and brochures.* © Kaija Dirkson

**1,379**  
events booked by Arts  
Commons Event Services

Accenture Consulting  
 Adult Recreational  
 Choir Society of  
 Calgary  
 AEG Live Canada, Ltd.  
 Alberta Association  
 of Architects  
 Alberta Health  
 Services  
 Alberta Theatre  
 Projects  
 AlphaMel Productions  
 Ambrose University  
 College  
 Applause Festival  
 Arts Commons  
 Presents  
 Asian Heritage  
 Foundation  
 Athabasca University  
 Attic Players  
 Avant-Garde Music  
 Studio  
 Ballet Classique  
 Ballet de Moscou, Inc.  
 Birnton Theatricals  
 Bishop Carroll High  
 School  
 Borden Ladner  
 Gervais LLP  
 Bow Valley Chorus  
 Bow Valley College  
 Brendan John Stevens  
 and Jacob Richard  
 MacArthur  
 Burnet Duckworth  
 & Palmer LLP.  
 Calgary Civic  
 Symphony  
 Calgary Girls Choir

Calgary International  
 Children's Festival  
 Calgary International  
 Film Festival  
 Calgary Lithuanian  
 Cultural Society  
 Calgary Opera  
 Calgary Philharmonic  
 Chorus  
 Calgary Philharmonic  
 Orchestra  
 Calgary Society  
 of Independent  
 Filmmakers  
 Calgary Stampede  
 Foundation  
 Calgary Stampede  
 Foundation: The  
 Young Canadians  
 School of Performing  
 Arts  
 Canada-China Culture  
 and Art Association  
 Canadian Civil  
 Liberties Education  
 Trust  
 Canadian Heritage  
 - BC  
 Cantares Venezuelan  
 Cultural Foundation  
 Casa Mexico in  
 Alberta Foundation  
 CCGC  
 Centre Stage Dance  
 Children's School  
 of Dance  
 Chris Michell Jazz  
 Christopher Sandvoss  
 Chromatic Theatre  
 City of Calgary -  
 Community Standards  
 City of Calgary -  
 Environmental and  
 Safety Management

City of Calgary -  
 IT Department  
 Company of Rogues  
 Curiously Canadian  
 Improv Guild  
 Dance on Edge  
 Dance Spectrum  
 Dark Matter  
 Productions  
 DDA - Didier  
 Morissonneau  
 DeFakto Theatre  
 Diversity Dance  
 & Performing Arts  
 Downstage  
 Dr. E.P. Scarlett Music  
 Parents Association  
 Dreams Take Flight  
 EJD Production Inc.  
 Encana Corporation  
 EnCorpse Dance  
 Ernst & Young, LLP  
 Experience Church  
 Festival Chorus  
 Fire Exit Theatre  
 Company  
 Foothills Academy  
 Glenn Dixon  
 Gordie Howe CARES  
 Government of  
 Alberta  
 Governors of the  
 University of Calgary  
 Graham Percy  
 Handsome Alice  
 Theatre  
 Hoodlum Theatre  
 Honens  
 Husky Energy  
 Iglesias Productions

Independent Media  
 Arts Alliance  
 Inside Out Theatre  
 International Festival  
 of Animated Objects  
 Investors Group  
 ISC2  
 Islamic Information  
 Society of Calgary  
 Jeff Parry Promotions  
 Jeunesse Classique  
 Ballet  
 Jewish Family Service  
 Calgary  
 Jones Entertainment  
 Group  
 Judith Mendelsohn  
 Kiewit Construction  
 Services ULC  
 Legacy Kitchens  
 Live Nation Canada  
 Inc.  
 Luminous Voices  
 Mercer (Canada)  
 Limited  
 Meridian Incentive  
 Consultants  
 Mike Chadwick  
 Management  
 Morin Music Studio  
 Mount Royal  
 University  
 Mpact Movement  
 MS Society of Canada  
 Musica Academy  
 National Theatre  
 School  
 New West Symphony  
 & Chorus  
 New Works Calgary  
 Nexen Energy ULC  
 Nhac Chieu Guitar  
 Orff the Wall  
 One Yellow Rabbit  
 Performance Theatre  
 Otafest Film & Cultural  
 Festival Planning  
 Committee  
 Paquin Entertainment  
 Parks Canada  
 (Yellowknife)

Paul Merce Concerts  
 Inc.  
 Peripheral Theatre  
 Philippine Festival  
 Council of Alberta  
 Philippine Student  
 Association  
 Pocket Ace  
 Productions  
 POWHERhouse  
 PREPSKILLS INC.  
 Productions Juste  
 pour rire II Inc.  
 Queena Yu and Sami  
 Mahmood Alam  
 Red Deer Symphony  
 RedPoint Media &  
 Marketing Solutions  
 Revv52  
 Rogers  
 Communications  
 Romanian-Canadian  
 Cultural Association  
 of Calgary  
 Rozsa Foundation  
 SAIT Student  
 Association Civil  
 Engineering  
 Technology Students  
 Club  
 Seadreamer  
 Productions  
 Search Tower  
 Company  
 Shangrila Calgary  
 Society (SCS)  
 Shantero Productions  
 Shoemaker Drywall  
 Supplies  
 Showtime Dance  
 Promotions  
 Shy-Ann Dance  
 Productions  
 Simon Fraser  
 University  
 Skipping Stone  
 Foundation  
 Soul to Sole Dance  
 Sour Dog  
 Springbank Dancers  
 Square Cat  
 Entertainment

StageCoach Theatre  
 Arts Calgary  
 Stratford Shakespeare  
 Festival  
 Studio C  
 TCB Rock and Roll  
 Legends  
 TEDx YYC  
 Theatre Alberta  
 Theatre BSMT  
 Theatre Calgary  
 Theatre of  
 Consequence  
 Theatre Encounter  
 Theatre Outre  
 The Natural Step  
 Canada  
 Thug Work  
 Tibetan Association  
 of Alberta  
 Tin Man Theatre  
 Traugott Building  
 Contractors  
 Tundra Swans Dance  
 Two Towers  
 Ultimate Dance  
 Company  
 University of Calgary  
 Orchestra  
 University of  
 Lethbridge  
 University of Waterloo  
 Urban Stories  
 Vanier School  
 Verb Theatre  
 Viva Musica Studio  
 Ltd.  
 West Island College  
 Western Canada High  
 School  
 Wild Rose Dance  
 Arts Association  
 Wood's Homes  
 Foundation  
 WordFest  
 World Beauty Fitness  
 & Fashion Inc  
 YYComedy Collective  
 Zurich Canada

175

organizations made  
 use of Arts Commons'  
 facilities



*Michael Kaeshammer's concert comes to a triumphant close. © Lemonade Pictures*



Happenings welcomes people of all ages from different walks of life for a free art party.



BD&P World Music artist Jake Shimabukuro (centre) poses for a photo with patrons in the Jack Singer Concert Hall. © Kaija Dirkson

# Arts Commons Presents



*“Excellent show and to add a celebration at the end for the 150th birthday was a highlight.”*

- Arts Commons Presents patron



Lightbox Studio hosts the exhibition *Hunting, Gathering, Worshipping*, by visual artist Lyndon Navalta.



Oliver Miguel performs on the duet stage ahead of a TD Jazz performance.

Arts Commons Presents...

# creates connections

In collaboration with One Yellow Rabbit's High Performance Rodeo, Arts Commons Presents welcomed Indigenous Australian supergroup, Black Arm Band, to Calgary. In addition to their amazing performance on the Jack Singer Concert Hall stage, the group performed at the Nakoda Elementary School in Morley, Alberta. Packed into the crowded auditorium, students of all ages sang and danced along with a culture from halfway around the world as they shared their traditional stories, creative energy, struggles, and triumphs as Indigenous Peoples. After the show, the students were eager to ask

their questions and even tried their hand at playing a didgeridoo. The collaborative initiative was a huge success.

As part of the Arts Commons donor engagement program Founders Circle, blues artist Reverend Peyton was interviewed by local blues musician Tim Williams, speaking to a group of 80 music supporters in the intimate venue of the Engineered Air Theatre. Over the course of two hours, audience members gained eye-opening insight into the life of a touring musician and how they find a way to make a living doing what they love.

As a vital part of Arts Commons' engagement, the TD Arts Access Pass created the opportunity for thousands of students, new Canadian citizens, and families challenged by a variety of circumstances to attend Arts Commons Presents concerts and special events. We were so delighted to be able to share these moments with those who otherwise would have been unable to attend.



*PCL Blues artist Reverend Peyton speaks to Arts Commons Founders Circle members in the Engineered Air Theatre. © Will Young*

632

*artists hired for  
Arts Commons  
Presents  
programming*

11,270

*Complimentary  
tickets provided  
through the generosity  
of Arts Commons  
supporters*



*“It was wonderful to be able to attend exciting events in my community and I am grateful to all the organizations that facilitated these opportunities”*

~ TD Arts Access Pass Patron

*Black Arm Band engages with students at Nakoda Elementary School in Morley, Alberta.  
© Alex Bonyun*

Arts Commons Presents...

# inspires learning

In November 2016, seventy-five jazz music students watched with rapt fascination as jazz singer Dee Dee Bridgewater and jazz trumpeter Theo Croker took the stage to speak about what it means to be a jazz musician, and how they came to establish their careers. Organized by CADME in partnership with Arts Commons, the students eagerly shared their questions with the inspiring songstress, and were floored when she treated them to a private performance. Bridgewater even invited a few of the students to share their voices with her; smiling at the wealth of young talent eager to blossom.

As a fitting follow-up, Arts Commons distributed 200 tickets to CADME so their students could attend the Miles Electric Band performance, the last concert in the TD Jazz 2016-17 season.

Now on its fourth season, the incredibly beneficial partnership with Campus

Calgary enabled Arts Commons to welcome hundreds of students into the building to learn through the arts, at Arts Commons Hub for Inspired Learning. During the 2016-17 season, eight schools with 340 students were introduced to the program and explored their curriculum through dance, music, visual arts, and theatre. Students not only gained a one-of-a-kind experience learning outside of their classroom, but often found new creative ways of expressing themselves, gaining confidence, and fostering a new love for learning.

Crossing boundaries and removing barriers, the students of West Dover School were invited to participate in a drum circle and smudging ceremony guided by artist Chantal Chagnon from the arts outreach organization Cree8, sharing the culture of the Indigenous students with the rest of the class, and helping to create both a knowledge and respect for everyone present.



Hundreds of students learned through the arts at Arts Commons Hub for Inspired Learning.



*“On behalf of CADME, our sincere thanks for offering this wonderful opportunity for so many students to witness world class live music in our city.”*

~ Chris Herard, Bishop Carroll High School

Dee Dee Bridgewater with CADME students. © Alex Bonyun



10,158  
students engaged



*“I learned that just about anything can be art as long as the piece of art makes you feel something.”*

- Gr. 2 student



Students learn about Indigenous drums with artist Chantel Chagnon.

Mavis Staples performs to an appreciative crowd at the Jack Singer Concert Hall © Kaija Dirkson



Ludovico Einaudi performs as part of BD&P World Music. © Will Young



Michael Kaeshammer rips up the keys for a night of boogie-woogie fun. © Lemonade Pictures

**38,989**

total attendance to ticketed  
Arts Commons Presents  
performances

Arts Commons Presents...

# uplifts and energizes

Despite a suffering economy, it was clear that our community still held high value for the inspiration that the arts provide. Arts Commons Presents hosted a full house to see the legendary Mavis Staples, a daughter of the civil rights movement and unmistakable voice of her generation; revelled in the ethereal sounds of pianist Ludovico Einaudi, who had previously and notoriously performed his beautiful compositions amongst crumbling icebergs in the Arctic; and rejoiced when trombone player Trombone Shorty brought the Jack Singer Concert Hall audience to its feet in excitement as he led his band through the crowd. We learned new things about our evolutionary ancestry from National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence and paleoanthropologist, Lee Berger. And we can't forget the Canada 150 celebration with Canadian musician Michael Kaeshammer, who brought the house down with his boogie-woogie piano playing, a roaring rendition of our national anthem, ending in excitement as hundreds of balloons cascaded from the

ceiling of the Jack Singer Concert Hall. It was hard to tell who was having more fun, the audience or Michael Kaeshammer himself, who remarked that he would come back to the Jack Singer Concert Hall again and again if invited.

During the Canada Day celebrations, an estimated 8,000 people packed Olympic Plaza for the free outdoor concert, in partnership with the City of Calgary, featuring Alberta Ballet, Bach Tots, Calgary Opera, Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, GlobalFest Urban Arts Crew, and the Rattle and Strum band; culminating in a *Strum n Sing* participatory rendition with Ian Tyson of his hit song *Four Strong Winds*. If it wasn't clear before, it certainly was then – this song will forever be Alberta's unofficial anthem.

The City of Calgary, in turn, won the Cultural Events Award presented by the Creative City Network of Canada, for hosting this and other city-wide events, in celebration of Canada 150.



*Ian Tyson leads the crowd on Canada Day for a group strum n sing of Four Strong Winds, Alberta's unofficial anthem.*



*“You could not have done any better!!!! Thank you!”*

- Arts Commons Presents patron

## Arts Commons Presents... **is for you**

*Happenings* at Arts Commons moved into its second year during our 2016-17 season and this free quarterly event welcomed many new and seasoned arts lovers. Hands on, immersive, and fun, *Happenings* is an evening of live music, artist chats, participatory art activities, and self-guided walking tours of the current exhibitions. Attendees learn more about the artists and are offered a deeper context for the work they create.

This season for *Happenings 8*, Arts Commons was pleased to partner with Market Collective to bring local Calgary artisans into the space to share and sell their work. It was hugely well-received,

and everyone was excited to see the new dynamic added to the event. It also had the added benefit of exposing both the artists and artisans to a new audience of people who were keen to learn more about their craft.

The Arts Commons Presents presentation of comedian Margaret Cho also gave us the chance to throw one heck of a Naughty Pre-Party. Featuring Canada's preeminent queer-feminist-ukulele-comedy band; the longest running gay organization still operating in the City of Calgary; a cultural enthusiast DJ, and a 3'10" trail-blazing comedian, we danced, laughed, and celebrated, transforming

the Jack Singer Lobby into a no-holds-barred party zone.

These events couldn't happen without involvement from our greater community. A special thank you goes out to our volunteers. From the moment patrons step out of their car and enter through our doors, Arts Commons concierge volunteers have been helping to direct guests, answer questions, and make everyone feel welcome. Arts Commons is grateful to the 426 volunteers who continue to donate their time to the arts, and make every Arts Commons experience exceptional.

**426**

volunteers engaged in  
Arts Commons Presents  
programming



*Naughty Pre-Party before Margaret Cho in the Jack Singer Concert Hall lobby. © Erin Belton*



Patrons participate in crafts at Happenings 8.  
© Mike Tan



Market Collective brought a whole new vibe to the Arts Learning Centre during Happenings 8.



Happenings 8 stage performer  
Jess Knights. © Mike Tan

**1,449**

volunteer hours contributed  
to Arts Commons Presents

# Demonstrates sustainability

## Sustainability in challenging economic times

As we continue to navigate through challenging economic times, our 2016-17 planning and budgeting process focused on ways to mitigate risk to our current revenue streams, as well as absorbing increasing costs. We were also motivated by the desire to give back to our community by working with our many partners to provide increased opportunities for free tickets and public programming.

## Fiscal Year 2016-17 Results

Despite budgeting for a break-even year, we ended the fiscal year with a modest surplus in operations of \$165,603 through focused efforts on increasing both earned and contributed revenues.

## Year over year comparisons

### Revenues:

Overall, in 2016-17 we saw recovery in many of our revenues streams as compare to the prior year:

- Contributed – a healthy increase of 10% in corporate sponsorship helped achieve an overall 1% increase
- Earned
  - Venue bookings increased by 3%
  - Ticket sales increased 12% - significant given current economic pressures
  - Increase in ticket sales also helped boost ticketing service revenues by 22%
  - Arts learning and education programs increased by 34%
  - Front of house revenues were down year over year by 1%

### Expenses:

In 2016-17 we faced increasing costs when compared to the prior year:

- With a sizable part time and casual work force, our labour costs continue to rise with the increasing minimum wage putting pressure on all departments, but especially front of house and ticketing services.
- Higher artist fees and exchange rates led to an overall 5% increase in programming expenses
- Expenses for Facilities increased 4% year over year due in part to increased utility and security costs, offset by savings in engineering and supplies. Support services expenses increased 4% as well, primarily in the areas of marketing, software and labour burden costs.



Arts Commons staff with National Geographic Explorer Charlie Hamilton James (centre). © Tasha Komery



*“It’s a pleasure to work with such a competent and caring team.”*

~ Arts Commons staff

**1%**  
increase in  
contributed  
revenues (YOY)

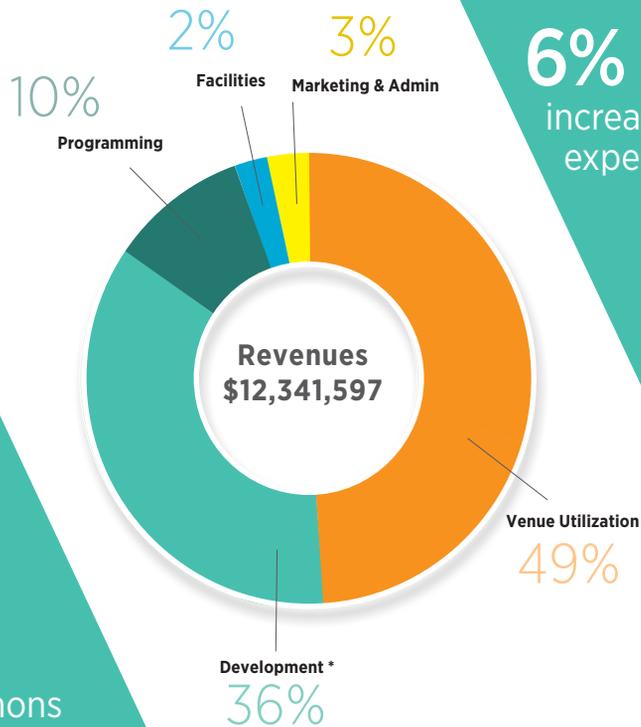
**7%**  
increase  
in earned  
revenues (YOY)

**85**  
Arts Commons  
equivalent staff

**Looking forward**

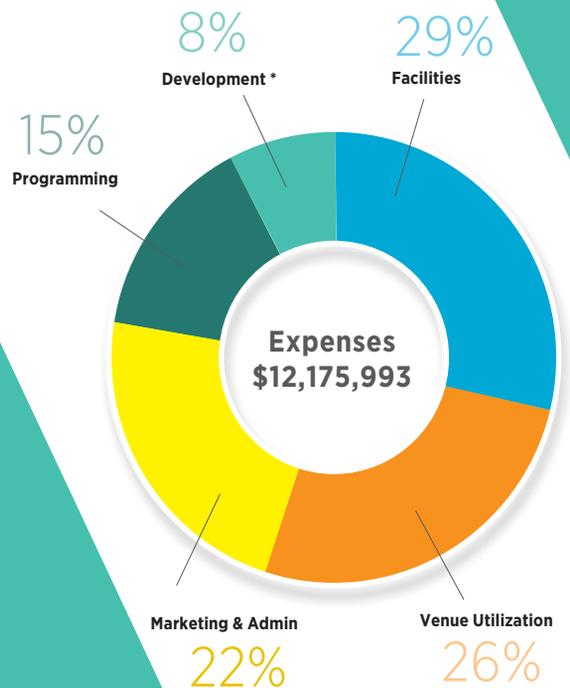
As we look forward to our 2017-18 season, we are excited to see our new season come to life, to invite the community to utilize our spaces in new and inventive ways, and to maintain and improve our facilities while managing the risks of our economic realities.

**\$1.975M**  
was raised in addition to our  
operating revenue, in support of  
Arts Commons life-cycle projects.



**6%**  
increase in  
expenses (YOY)

**1.3%**  
operational  
surplus  
(CURRENT FY)



*\*Includes \$289,130 of goods and services in kind*



# Thank you benefactors

Through the ongoing support and generosity of corporations, foundation, governments, and individuals, Calgarians, as well as visitors to our wonderful city have access to Arts Commons, Calgary's preeminent gathering space. Arts Commons is where creativity comes to life, remarkable experiences are shared, and meaningful memories are made to last a lifetime.

We are extremely grateful to those that believe in the vital role Arts Commons plays in helping to make our community a better place to live by continuing to invest in our programming priorities. Of note, during the 2016-17 Season we would like to recognize sponsors who have generously made multiple year commitments. Burnet, Duckworth

& Palmer LLP renewed their title sponsorship of the award-winning BD&P World Music series for another three years, and Repsol Oil & Gas Canada Inc. is maintaining its support of our distinguished speaker series, *National Geographic Live*, through to the 2018-19 Season. We're also encouraged by the vote of confidence so clearly demonstrated by new sponsors, Keyera Corp. and Imperial Oil Limited, that decided to align their community investments with Arts Commons programming initiatives during the 2016-17 Season.

It's only because of the ongoing generosity of Calgary's corporate community, local foundations, all three levels of government, and our



thoughtful Explorers Circle and Founders Circle members that Arts Commons is able to continue be a key contributor to the social, economic, cultural, intellectual life, and well-being of Calgarians and visitors.



*"Arts Commons is such a vital part of our community. Every event we attend is amazing. It's an honour and a privilege to be part of Calgary's cultural centre."*

- Founders Circle Legacy Builder



*"I recommend joining Explorers Circle because it is a wonderful opportunity to meet Explorers, while supporting National Geographic and Arts Commons in the work they do to give back to the community."*

- Explorers Circle Engagement Sponsor

# Private and Public Sector Support

Arts Commons wishes to express our sincere appreciation to the following corporations, foundations, governments, and passionate community leaders who gave generously to support Arts Commons as we played a key role in the social, economic, cultural and intellectual life and well-being of Calgarians and visitors throughout the 2016-17 Season.

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Members of Founders Circle support Arts Commons education programs, which make the arts more accessible to young minds through a variety of impactful initiatives, such as the Hub for Inspired Learning. They also help us bring renowned artists to perform in the BD&P World Music and TD Jazz, to name only two of the music series programmed through Arts Commons Presents.



Founders Circle members enjoy dinner at Teatro.  
© Will Young

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Cover: TD Jazz, Trombone Shorty, performing on the Jack Singer Concert Hall stage. © Will Young  
Back cover: TD Jazz, Dee Dee Bridgewater with Theo Crocker. © Will Young