



April 25, 2019

Legislative Services  
City of Victoria  
1 Centennial Square,  
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

Re. RMTS Presentation to Council

Dear Mayor and Council,

The User Group supports a broad array of arts and entertainments at the Royal Theatre, and are pleased that the Royal and McPherson Theatres Society (RMTS) have begun to communicate directly with owner municipalities. We recognize the importance of sharing multiple perspectives on the subject of access to the public’s theatres, but wish to voice our concern about the misleading information and biased research in the RMTS presentation. Enclosed is information to provide you with important context. We are also concerned that the RMTS Strategic Plan was created without public consultation, nor the participation of the non-profit users or owner municipalities.

The Royal Theatre User Group has consulted with all the non-profit arts users, who collectively represent 78 percent of the public who use the Royal Theatre.

In order to resolve these issues in a transparent fashion, and restore positive relationships among all parties involved, **we are recommending a third-party review and a comprehensive stakeholder consultation.**

Sincerely,

Kathryn Laurin  
CEO, Victoria Symphony

Stephen White  
Executive Producer, Dance Victoria

Ian Rye  
CEO, Pacific Opera Victoria

Alan Hollingworth  
Chair, Board of Directors

Susan Howard  
Chair, Board of Directors

Robert Milne  
Chair, Board of Directors

**on behalf of:**

2,500 members  
+ 450 volunteers

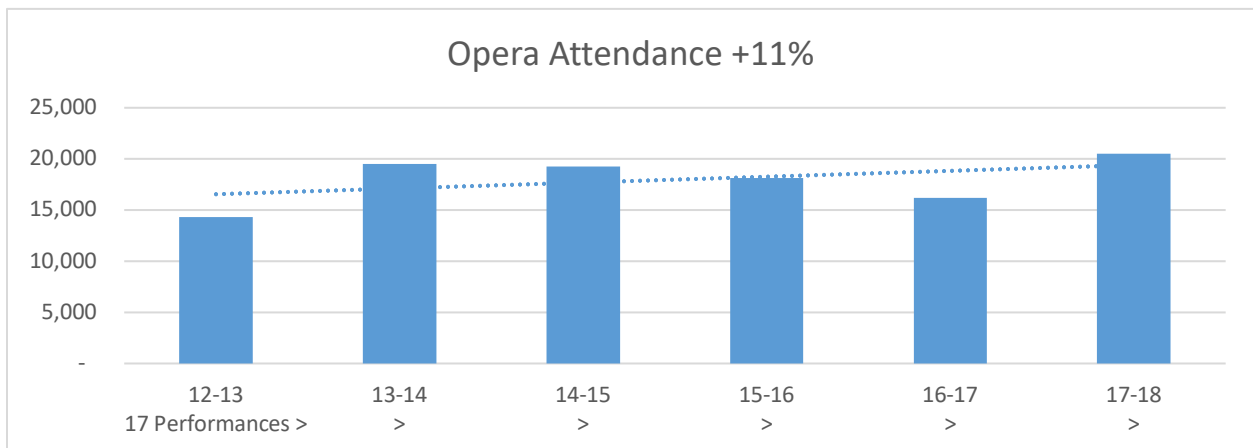
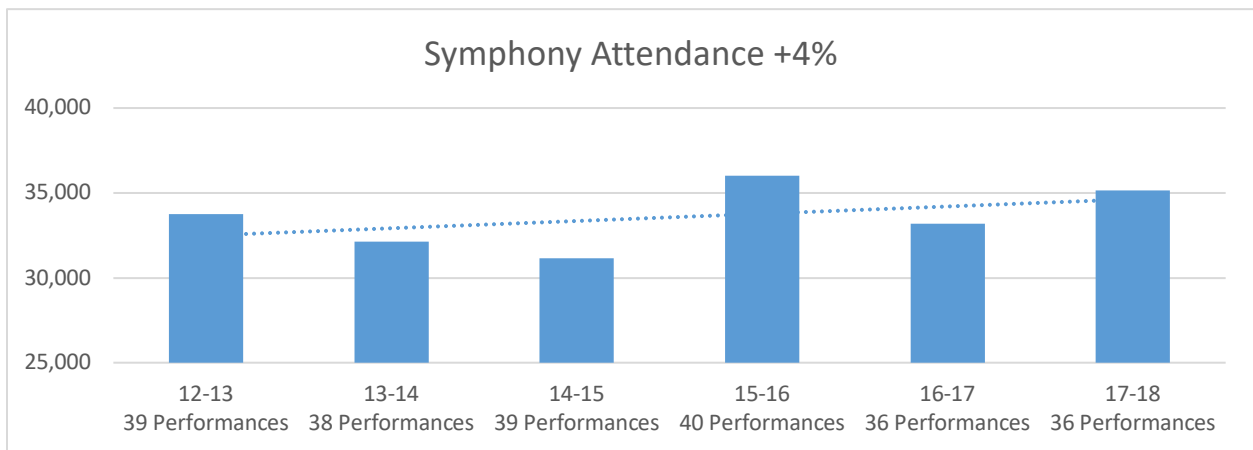
1,200 members  
+ 85 volunteers

3,280 members  
+120 volunteers

and **68,138 audiences** at the Royal Theatre, plus **56,300 at community** events and **25,700 youth**

## Royal Theatre Ticket Sales

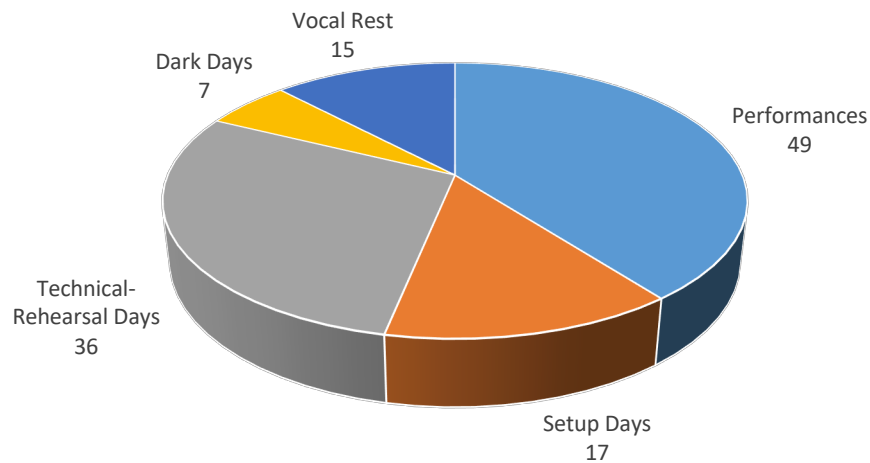
The RMTS data as it is presented is misleading. It does not factor the overall attendance including students and complimentary ticket programs, nor the number of performances, thereby comparing apples to oranges. For example, Pacific Opera presented 24 performances per year between 2009 and 2011, and after the recession reduced the number of opera titles (and its theatre use), offering 17 performances per year since 2011 - during which period attendance grew by 11%.



## Royal Theatre Use

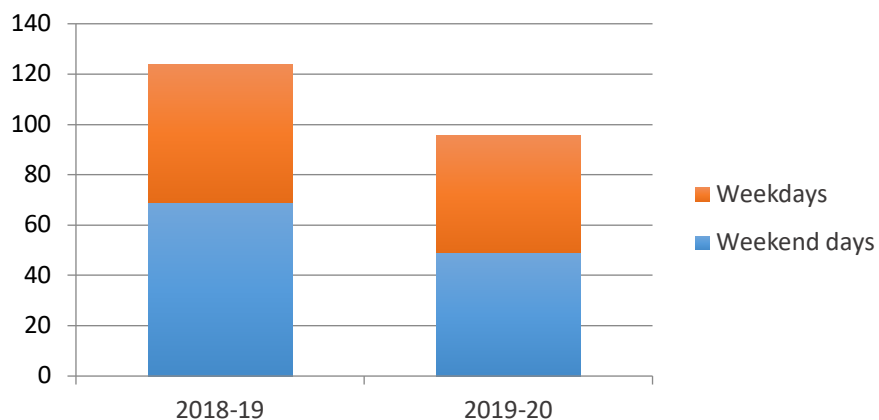
The RMTS presentation implies that the Symphony and Opera's use of the theatre is inefficient. It does not account for the fact that Symphony and Opera performances are created from the ground up, with as many as 100 artists, requiring considerably more setup and technical-rehearsal time than a touring music/theatre/comedy act. One day of vocal rest between opera performances are industry standard worldwide, and protected by collective agreements. Pacific Opera has developed scenarios for 2021-22 to reduce the number of technical days from 36 to 32 per year. The elimination of 7 dark days per year can be accomplished by moving 5 performances from weekends to weekdays, resulting in an estimated 7% decline in attendance.

### 2018-19 Opera and Symphony Theatre Use



The Victoria Symphony have released 18 weekend days per year by taking the risk of moving half their programming to UVic Centre.

### Symphony and Opera Theatre Use



## Arts and Entertainment Survey

The CRD's own research offers an alternate perspective on the intended purpose of the Royal Theatre, for all citizens to participate in the arts (64%), to showcase local professional artists (63%) and community arts groups (61%).

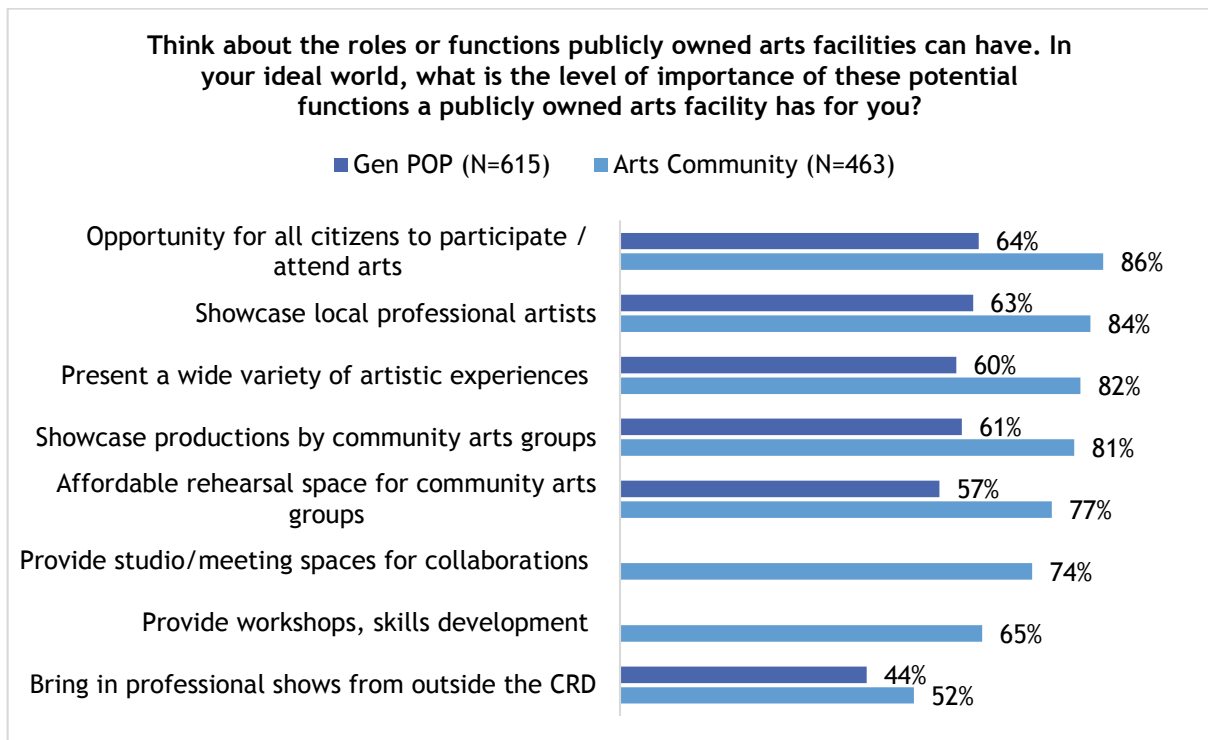


**Regional Arts Facilities:  
A Framework**  
December 2016

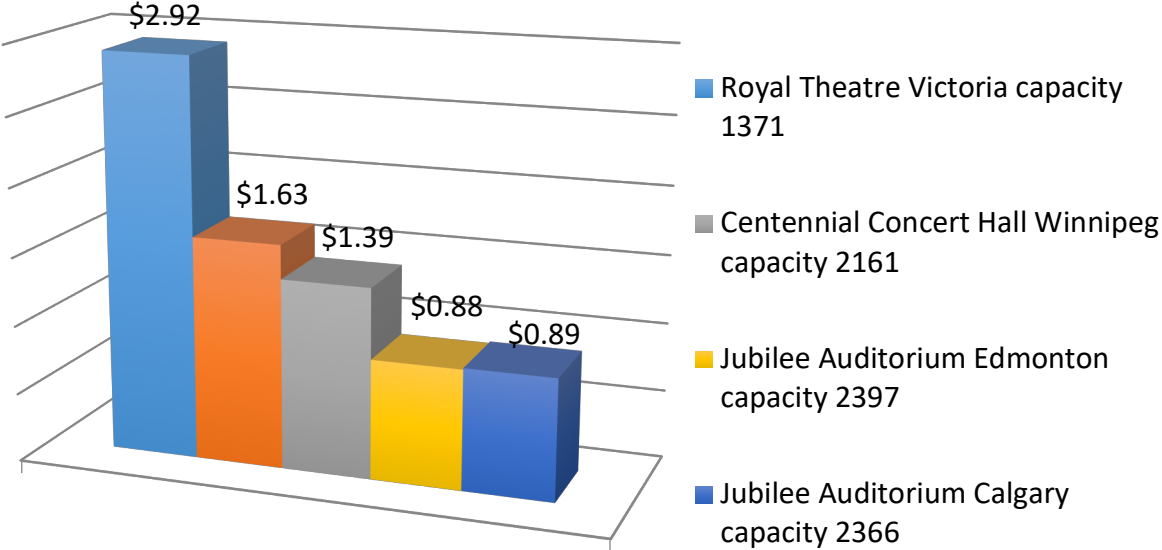


### IDENTIFYING NEEDS

Priorities identified by the general public in the CRD and the arts community are broad and should be considered by decision-makers and decision influencers.



# Royal Theatre Rent Per Seat



Rental Rate per Seat

## Weekend Performance Rates