



Black Box Theatre Feasibility Study May 2019

Prepared for: The Capitol Theatre Restoration Society
By: Eden DuPont Communications

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Introduction & Scope of Services

In November of 2018, the Capitol Theatre Historical Society contracted Eden DuPont to undertake a feasibility study seeking input into the need and/or desire for the Capitol Theatre to expand its current venue to include a 125 seat Black Box Theatre performance space.

The scope of services was to include an evaluation of the perceived need/desire for additional programming space based on demographics, impact of new or discontinued services, other performing arts facilities in the community and the overall trends and best practices of other communities as they pertain to performing arts centres.

Comparison research, focus groups, telephone interviews and a public online survey were among the tactics used to collect input from two distinct audiences; facility renters (existing and potential) and patrons (existing and potential).

Eden DuPont has worked as an independent communications consultant for the last decade as the lead project manager for multiple contracts in the K-12 education sector. Working closely with school district administration to analyze and evaluate communication practices, Eden has helped several organizations overhaul and develop new content management systems by providing ongoing guidance and employee training.

Eden has also networked extensively throughout the West Kootenay region, in her prior role as Educational Liaison with Selkirk College. Acting as a liaison between the College and key audiences, including educational stakeholders and community service organizations, she toured the Columbia Basin to identify and facilitate on-going recruitment opportunities for the College.

More recently, her involvement and personal interest in contributing to the arts & culture sector, Eden was the project coordinator for a successful community dance project, funded in part through the Canada 150 Heritage Fund – Dance Locale 2017. She is also an avid volunteer, dedicated to community development, helping to administer and advise grant applicants for CKCA Arts and Culture funding in the Slocan Valley.

Acknowledgements

Funding and support for this feasibility study was provided by the Columbia Kootenay Cultural Alliance through the Organizational Development Program.

Current Operations

The vision of the historic Capitol Theatre is to remain the premier venue for performing arts in the Kootenays and continue to be a thriving arts organization that inspires excellence and passion.

Their mission - community enrichment through the arts, is one that has been in place for a considerable length of time, and resonates deeply with current staff, former employees, existing renters and patrons alike.

An additional set of values was collected through an organizational assessment completed through the Non-Profit Advisors Program (CBT) in 2016 and is intended to support the vision & mission as well as to guide the theatre's daily operations:

- Strive for excellence in all areas of our activities.
- Respect for individuals and for equity in accessibility and opportunity.
- Personal and Community Development related to the performing arts.
- Sound governance, management and fiscal responsibility.
- Accountability to our local and regional community.
- Respectful treatment of all those engaged with the theatre.
- Provide arts opportunities for both viewing and participating in every art form – theatre, dance, music, film, visual arts and lectures.
- Community engagement through volunteerism, outreach to youth and families, education, building audiences; learning, growing, offering experiences.
- Work cooperatively with other organizations, partnerships, collaboration.
- Prioritize community outreach and community engagement in programming

The vision, mission and values all suggest a commitment to providing accessible, affordable and high quality experiences for their renters and audiences.

The Capitol Theatre stage sees between 120-130 events annually. This number excludes rehearsal bookings and any pre and post-lighting hang sessions. The Capitol Theatre Season Series consists of 10-12 performances per year, a Family Series of 5-6 shows and a 4 part Classical Concert Series hosted by the Nelson Overture Concert Society. The Capitol also produces 3-4 shows annually as well as offering educational programming on stage.

Comparison Research for Black Box Theatre in BC

PAL Studio Theatre

Location: Metro-Vancouver

Seating: Up to 150, Row seating with or without risers, cabaret style, Conference style set-up

Average Rental Fee: \$600 per day

Stage: Studio type 24x16x12, sprung floor

Amenities: 1 Dressing Room, Green Room, Piano,

Lighting: 40 Instruments, 54 Dimmers ETC Element Lighting Board

Electrical: Grounded wall sockets Sound-only wall and grid sockets Projector with VGA Cable

Sound: QU-16 Sound Board Mac Computer with Q-Lab 8 Wired Microphones

Website: www.palstudiotheatre.com

Jack Shadbolt Centre – Studio Theatre

Location: Burnaby

Seating: 160, Portable Bleachers

Average Rental Fee: \$500 per day

Stage: 42x30x25, sprung floor (maso), Wings

Amenities: Dressing Rooms, Green Room, Rehearsal space, Piano, Scene shop, dance floor, computer and Video projector

Lighting: 150 source fours full stage scroller set 6 ICues 72/144 ETC Express console 96 ETC Sensor dimmers DF50 difuser

Electrical: 200 Amp 3 phase camlok 100 Amp disconnect 50 Amp stove All 15 amp circuits separate

Sound: DDA 32 channel Console EAW three way speaker system Patch bay Full rack

Website: <https://www.burnaby.ca/City-Services/Rentals-And-Catering/Banquets-And-Weddings/Shadbolt-Centre-for-the-Arts/Theatre-And-Performance-Space.html>

Kay Meek Arts Centre

Location: West Vancouver

Seating: 146-216, bleacher style

Average Rental Fee: \$800 weekday, \$1100 weekend day, technical rehearsal fee \$850

Amenities: Dressing room, green room,

Lighting: Complete house hang. Scroller top wash. ETC Ion Control

Electrical: 200 amp three phase can be arranged

Sound: Meyer UPJ-1P Flown PA. Yamaha LS9-32 Sound Board

Website: www.kaymeekcentre.com

Comparison Research continued..

Chan Centre – Telus Studio Theatre

Location: Metro-Vancouver

Seating: 100-250

Average Rental Fee: \$2000

Stage: Flat floor, depends on set up

Amenities: Dressing rooms, piano

Lighting: Complete house hang, there are (53) 575w S4 bodies, (5) 19° lenses, (38) 26° lenses, and (10) 36° lenses remaining. ETC Ion Control 2400w Strand CD 80 Dimmers. Additional equipment, cables, and accessories are available from the general building stock

Electrical: large inventory of 20amp TLG cable

Sound: (2) KV Ex10 speakers are rigged in a centre cluster configuration (End Stage room configuration). (2) EAW SB600e subwoofers are located on the catwalk level, immediately behind the cluster. KV-2's on stands or other additional FOH P.A. may be available. Booth console position has (2) JBL Control 1 Studio (booth) Monitors

Website: www.chancentre.com

Kelowna Community Theatre

Location: Kelowna

Seating: 80-90, folding chairs

Average Rental Fee: commercial rate: \$540, non-profit rates/local producer: \$270

non-profit local presenter: \$378, rehearsal rates vary

Stage: just risers, optional stage risers, 4 leg drapes on track, One split main drape

Amenities: washrooms, not wheelchair accessible, piano,

Lighting: lighting hang is in a grid pattern and consists of: ETC Insight 3 lighting console
18 x LED Microh Rio Zoom 19 Quad pars, 20 x Altman 360Q 6 x 12 spots, 4 x Source Four pars
24 Lightronic 1.2 KW Dimmers - 3 dimmers are parked for LED power, 1 mirror ball w/rotating motor (optional)

Electrical: Video and Projection - Flown Epson projector and screen hung front of main drape

Sound: One pair of powered Meyer UPA-1 loudspeakers flown, One powered Meyer USW-1P subwoofer flown, Allen & Heath Mix wizard 16 Channel mixer, 16 x 4 channel snake patched to mix position

Website: <https://theatre.kelowna.ca>

Chilliwack Cultural Centre – Rotary Hall Studio Theatre

Location: Chilliwack

Seating: 160, festival seating

Average Rental Fee: \$585 or 10% of Gross Ticket Sales

Stage: 40x32x21, sprung floor, no risers

Amenities: Dressing Rooms, Green Room, Rehearsal space, Piano

Lighting: Top wash of RGB LED fixtures, Full stage front wash, 4 specials, 4 Elation Platinum spot 5R moving fixtures

Electrical: 50 amp range plug, Multiple 15 amp U-Ground plugs, Multiple Isolated 15 amp U-Ground plugs for sound equipment

Sound: Meyer PA, 32 channel Allen and Heath Console. Microphones and Stage monitors

Website: www.chilliwackculturalcentre.ca

Focus Group Input

Two focus group sessions were conducted in January 2019. A list of potential participants were identified and selected based on; their involvement and knowledge of the performing arts industry and existing renter experience.

For a complete list of Focus Group Participants: See Addendum A

For a complete list of Focus Group Questions and Activities: Addendum B

The first objective was to clearly define what a Black Box Theatre is and catalogue the amenities of such a theatre space. This open discussion amongst participants ensured that everyone was on the same page during the focus group exercises.

Focus Group highlights

i. What is a Black Box Theatre?

- Flexible (Seating, Lighting, Set arrangements)
- Caters to the widest range of creative possibilities
- Accessible for Multi-use purposes to accommodate wide range of different user groups
- Full lighting and sound capabilities
- Entirely black interior (walls, floor)
- Act as safe rehearsal space
- Allow for a variety of theatrical productions and encourage unconventional use.
- Accommodates small scale and creatively staged shows.
- Flexible, open space with flexible seating, open to all mediums
- Seat orientation could be alley, in the round, cabaret, thrust.

Participants were then taken through a SWOT analysis. The questions asked were designed to collect input on the current theatre venue's strengths and weaknesses in order to determine the opportunities and challenges that the theatre may experience if they were to expand their venue to include a Black Box Theatre performance space.

ii. Capitol Theatre Strengths

- Offers wide range of performances that appeal to diverse audiences
- Welcoming, hard-working & helpful staff
- Ambiance, heritage, beautiful setting
- Community involvement & collaboration
- Downtown Location, reputable and familiar to Nelsonites
- Reputation as premier performing arts venue in town
- Support: technical, box office, accessibility,
- Excellent technical set up – lights, stage, backstage
- Affordable community rates
- Well maintained, clean, beautiful setting
- Great team to work with: Front box office support, costume shop, technical support
- Large audience capacity for our small population to host bigger shows

Focus Group Input continued..

iii. Capitol Theatre Weaknesses

- Accessibility: hard to book
- Too large a theatre for smaller productions
- Hard to use as a classroom for education, but offered as one
- Availability – must be booked a year in advance
- Large audience capacity doesn't work for all shows
- Too expensive to book for smaller productions can't fill that many seats, a losing venture.
- Challenging to book
- Difficult for smaller productions to afford
- Sound system could be better
- Not available in the summer.
- Not available to the community enough
- Needs a fly system
- Limitations of space and physical building (small wings, no separate rehearsal space)
- Staging is not flexible, doesn't work well for smaller more intimate shows
- Finding dates can be challenging.
- Venue seems to cater to specific types of renters
- Lobby is too small, awkward both before and after performances, bottleneck

Overall, the discussion revealed consensus on both the strengths and weaknesses. Four key weaknesses were identified that prompted the question of how an additional performance space in the Black Box theatre style would benefit the Capitol Theatre rental audience.

Availability

The Capitol Theatre is difficult to book. The lack of available performance and/or rehearsal space has limited many users that are not in a position to be able to plan a year in advance. The need for and lack thereof of rehearsal space was expressed as a particular problem for cultural development in the region.

Theatre size

The capacity of the main space is simply too large for a number of local renters. Pressure to fill the theatre discourages smaller groups from pursuing experimental productions. A number of renters expressed interest in being able to rent rehearsal space, noting that the current performance hall is not affordable for smaller productions or just rehearsing.

Audience Experience

Renters seeking to create more intimate and interactive productions feel restricted by the proscenium theatre seating, especially when audience turnout is small where performing to a small group in a large space can significantly impact the experience for both the audience and the performers.

Cost

For all renters, the cost of access is of primary importance, and there was anxiety expressed on the part of nonprofit organizations, independent small-scale producers and educators as to their ability to continue to afford renting the existing performance hall without assurance that their costs can be recovered.

Focus Group Input continued..

iv. Programming opportunities

Focus Groups were led through a brainstorming exercise to identify programming opportunities and prospective use of a Black Box theatre space. These suggestions were then put out to Patrons in the public survey to evaluate interest. Again, there was consensus in the type of programming the existing renters were most interested in seeing and producing: more interactive, experimental, community-driven and community-created performances.

spoken word	fringe festivals
burlesque	cabaret
stand up comedy	solo acts
new theatre in works	poetry slams
play readings	living room theatre
literary readings	choirs (performances and rehearsal)
book launches	multi-media works
small musical events	experimental dance
media installations	student/youth productions
immersive theatre	community recital space
workshops	small music ensemble performances
panels	youth theatre camps

v. Pricing, Amenities and Availability

Focus group participants were asked to rank the importance of price, amenities provided and availability to better understand the renter's perspective.

63% agreed that rental price was the most important factor in renting. Comments around rental pricing for a Black Box Theatre were as follows:

- "There should be an hourly rate and a day rate"
- "There should be a performance rate with some tech support: \$100-250"
- "\$30 per hour, with perhaps a sliding scale for lower income, non-profit."
- "Rate should be ¼ of the current rate to reflect audience size."

Availability was the second top priority for focus group participants. Comments collected include:

- "Should be available for rent 7 days a week, evenings and weekends."
- "Want the ability to do runs i.e. Wednesday through Saturday for two weeks."
- "Needs to be available in the summer."

As for amenities that a Black Box Theatre should provide, all focus group participants unanimously agreed that the space would need to meet up-to-date sound, lighting and technical requirements. Access to back stage area, washrooms and a piano were also on the wish list.

Phone Interview Input

Telephone Interviews took place February – April with a select group of participants that were identified and selected based on; their expertise, involvement and knowledge of the performing arts sector in Nelson and surrounding area. With each individual contributing unique perspectives based on their expertise, specific questions were not posed, but rather the interview format invited candid comments. The qualitative data collected through these interviews produced a selection of themes which have been selected to summarize the comments provided.

For a complete list of telephone interview participants: See Addendum C

Music & Choir at the Capitol

“The current theatre hall at the Capitol provides an excellent venue for large cast choir performances. However the back stage area is limiting (lack of places for performers waiting) a secondary or adjunct space would prove beneficial. Smaller ensembles could utilize a secondary space if it were not too expensive to rent, and for the audience it would be way more appropriate a setting for those shows that require this intimacy. There would be acoustical considerations to assess and necessary to install an adequate sound system.”

“Booking commercial music is often last minute and the challenge with the Capitol is getting dates. Frustrating when the Capitol is booked to allow for rehearsal time or maintenance (repainting the stage), can't book a touring show that is coming through even though the revenue from a ticketed event will make more than a closed rehearsal booking.”

Education in the Performing Arts

“Teaching theatre arts necessitates authentic theatre experiences for students, and the Capitol provides the right amenities; the technical lighting and sound, charming setting and heritage appeal, back stage, orchestra pit, green room and dressing rooms. While drama spaces in schools are essential, it is lovely to have access to other professional facilities for the purpose of teaching. A black box theatre space would also potentially serve the needs of more community educational workshops, scene study classes for a broader audience that wishes to participate.”

“School theatre spaces are being utilized all of the time, and it is rare that the school district would rent these spaces out to the community because of the potential for it to disrupt in-school programming. Besides, location and seating in the drama rooms are not ideal.”

Phone Interview Input continued..

Changing Times

"20 years ago, Nelson was alive with live music and small theatre offerings. But with the economy shift and housing crash, Nelson has experienced a shift towards being more professionalized, and a more expensive place to live with gentrification. There used to be multiple smaller spaces to rent, which attracted emerging artists and performers, but now there is a facility gap in this town. It would be great to see Nelson come back to life with a smaller flexible space that could contribute to rebuilding that vibrant artistic scene."

"Theatre in this town has changed in the last 16 years. There were more smaller theatre groups in town, people did theatre everywhere – churches, cafes, parks, in private homes. You can do theatre anywhere – but it has its constraints. The Capitol used to be booked a lot more by locals, when the season series wasn't as big. But it can be cost prohibitive for smaller groups to book, if they can even get a booking. It would be awesome to have a smaller space for locals, but would it be affordable?"

History of Black Box Theatre in town

"Nelson History Theatre ran a black box theatre out of Hart Hall for a number of years. BC Gaming and various other grant monies made this possible. Seating was for 90-100, and many sat on the floor. Hart Hall created an intimate experience for the audience, because of its size and the relationship with the audience and the stage. The infrastructure wasn't extensive and we could bring some sound and lighting in. But it wasn't sustainable to keep going without the funding."

"The idea of Nelson needing a Black Box theatre for community use is nothing new. It's been floated before a number of times without success. For small scale producers it would be great to have a smaller theatre, that could run shows longer, but it would have to be affordable."

"SD8 has two black box theatres, at LVRogers and Trafalgar Middle School. But they are rarely available to the public, they might rent it out for a night, but there is no way they would rent it out for a whole week which is what is required to put on a show."

Phone Interview Input continued..

Theatre Repute

"The Capitol is known as the place in town to go for theatre and performing arts. That creates problems for non-Capitol Theatre productions, because people are very traditional in terms of what they will do. They won't cross the street for something new. The location and history are very strong amenities they have going for them."

"Location is everything. The Capitol's downtown location can't be beat for getting people to turn out."

"The continuity of specific service over 30 years is one of the Capitol's greatest assets, they've developed a template that works well for this community – picking out the pieces that are always good, like the Pantomime and Youth Theatre Productions - they continue to cater to what the community wants. But maybe they should consider what they have to lose if they mess with their already successful model?"

Technical considerations

"There is literally no other ideal space to rent for performing arts other than the Capitol, unless you want no infrastructure. You need to bring the gear in to the halls, churches, and might be dealing with limited power capacity in most places."

"Lighting is definitely the hardest thing to bring into a flexible, temporary space and theatrical productions have significant lighting needs."

"Sound is easier to bring in, but you need to know someone with a system, and it can be expensive to rent."

"It would be beneficial if a new theatre space didn't require the cost of a technician always, it comes down to the scale of affordability for some smaller groups, perhaps with the smaller theatre they wouldn't need to pay the technician on-call to help cut costs."

Public Survey Input

An online public survey was conducted to collect input from the general public. Questions were derived to better understand patron demographics, to evaluate customer service satisfaction of existing patrons, to determine patron motivation for attending Capitol theatre events, and evaluate interest in new programming ideas based on feedback collected during the focus groups.

The survey link was distributed to all current Capitol Theatre members through the newsletter, published and promoted on the Capitol Theatre website as a unique event, press releases were sent to local and regional media, radio interviews with Kootenay Coop Radio, and EZRock encouraging the public to participate.

Incentive to complete the survey was created by offering a weekly draw for prizes: 2 tickets to the Youth Summer Production of James and the Giant Peach and a \$25 gift certificate to the Capitol Theatre.

The public survey ran for 1 month and received 187 unique submissions during this time.

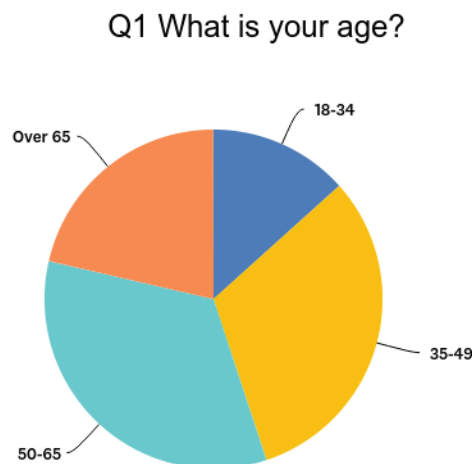
Complete Survey results are included in Addendum D.

Complete list of media coverage is included in Addendum E.

List of draw prize winners is included in Addendum F.

i. Patron Demographics - Survey Highlights

- All age categories were represented, with the exception of youth (18 and under) in survey results. A separate survey targeting youth may be recommended if deemed important.



-The majority of survey participants reside in Nelson. 32% reported living outside of town limits.

-Household income varied, with the largest category of survey participants reporting earnings of 50-100K (35%)

-77% of survey participants were not currently Capitol Theatre members, which could indicate opportunity for membership growth and theatre support.

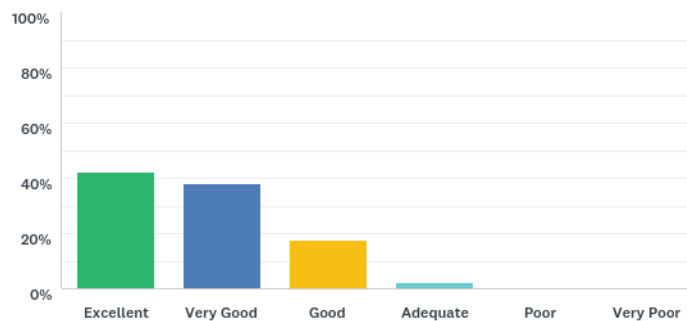
-53% of survey participants have been attending performances at the Capitol Theatre for 15+ years, indicating sustained support over the years and a perceived factor for theatre's positive reputation.

Public Survey Input

ii. Customer Satisfaction - Survey Highlights

- Well over the majority of survey participants rated the programming at the Capitol as excellent or very good. This data does not interpret whether patrons are attending Capitol series programming or external rentals.

Q15 Overall, how do you rate the quality of the programming currently offered by the Capitol Theatre?



-74% of survey participants indicated they would like to attend more performances in the future, with nearly half of survey participants (49%) already indicating they attend 6 or more shows per year.

-The top two barriers to attending performances were reported as: Show was sold out (57%) Ticket price was too high (45%).

iii. Motivation for Attending Capitol Events - Survey Highlights

-Survey participants were given a wide range of reasons to select from as to what motivates them to attend performances at the Capitol, including the option to provide their own response if not provided as an option.

The two top reasons were:

- I go to performances that sound interesting or entertaining (92%)
- I go to be emotionally moved or inspired (73%)

These results indicate that programming selection is clearly valued by patrons.

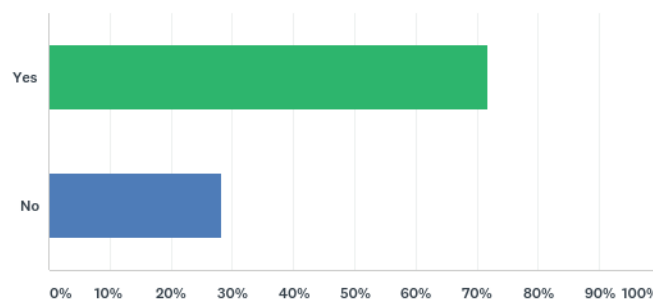
-52% of survey participants indicated that they would be more likely to attend more Capitol theatre events if the programming were more diverse and 44% indicated they would be more likely to attend if ticket prices were less expensive.

Public Survey Input

iv. Black Box Theatre programming - Survey Highlights

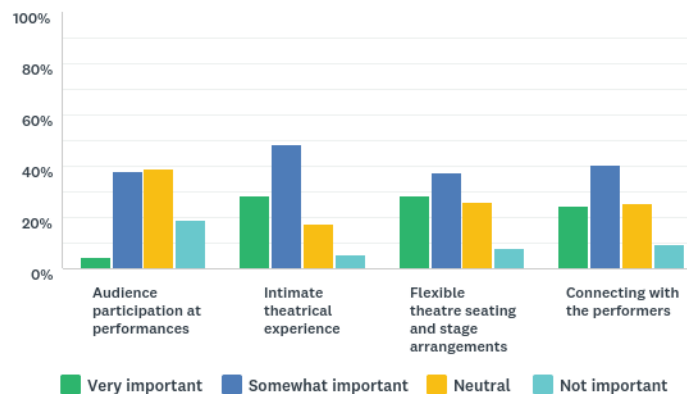
-Survey participants were questioned as to their knowledge of what Black Box Theatre was, and a description was provided to ensure the questions that followed would infer informed responses. 71% indicated they already knew what Black Box Theatre was.

Q17 Do you know what Black Box Theatre is?



-Drawing on key factors identified by focus group participants as important to Black Box Theatre type of performances, survey participants rated their interest in the following:

Q18 Rate your interest in the following:

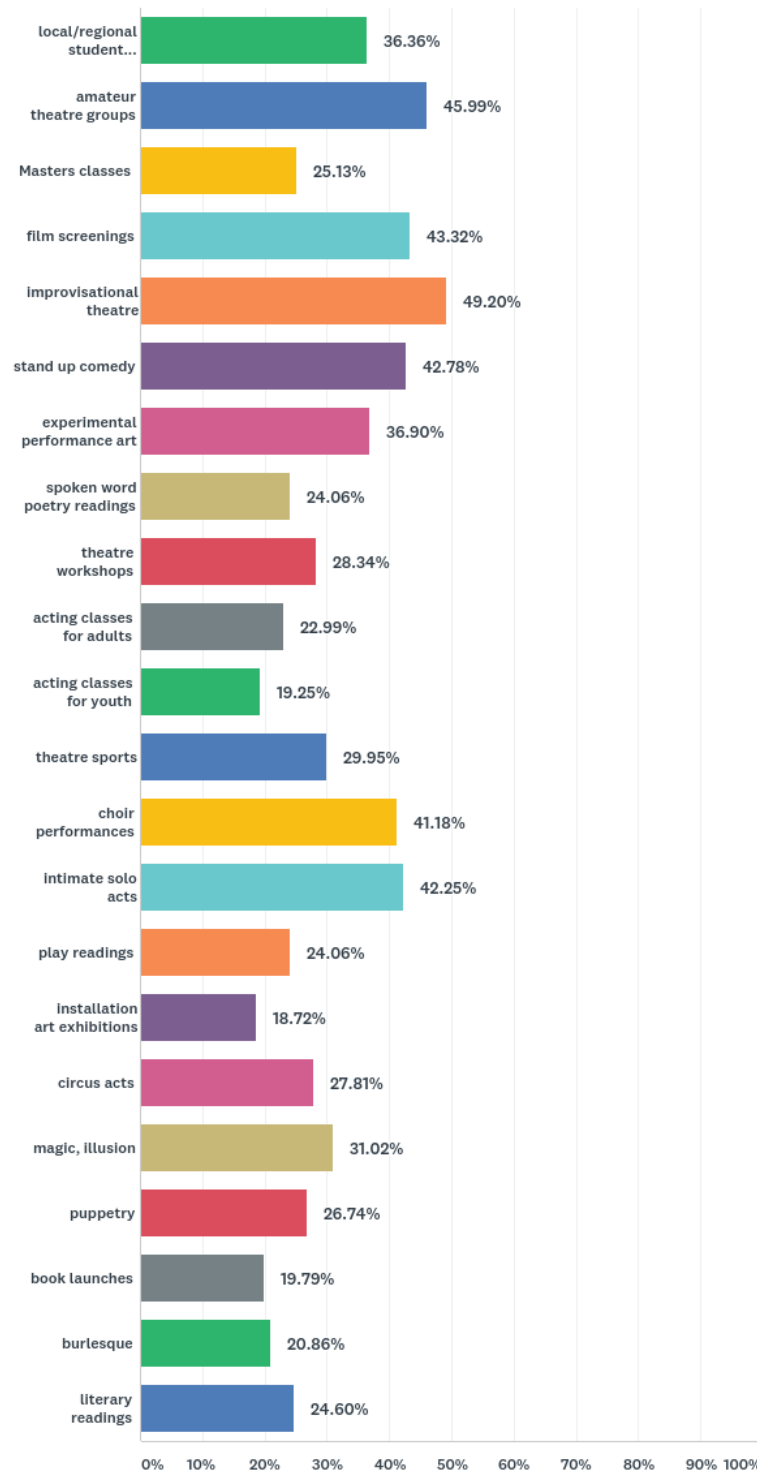


-A list of potential Black Box Theatre programming ideas were generated from the focus group input. The public was then asked which of these programs they would be interesting in seeing more of (Survey participants could choose multiple selections). See Addendum G for qualitative responses.

Public Survey Input

Black Box Theatre programming

Q16 Of the below, in addition to the current programming and season shows, which types of programming would you be interested in seeing more of at the Capitol Theatre? Check all that apply



Existing Facility Rentals in Nelson

Through focus group input and telephone interviews there was much discussion around existing facility rentals in Nelson. As typical with many other small communities, there are a number of venues that the community utilizes as performance spaces such as churches, community halls, school facilities, meeting rooms and other found spaces. However the consensus seemed to be that each venue had its challenges, specifically when it came to producing and presenting theatre in venues other than the Capitol.

Here are some of the comments related to specific rental facilities in Nelson:

School Facilities (SD8 – LVR & Trafalgar Drama rooms, all school gymnasiums)

"Drama rooms are rarely available and affordable for extended periods of time (more than a couple days) because the students utilize them during the day. It is unreasonable to stage a performance if you have to take down the set each night."

"There is the added cost of custodial for groups that wish to rent a school drama room or gymnasium even for rehearsing."

"School classrooms and gymnasiums lack the ambiance required to support live performances."

Halls (Hart Hall, Scout Hall, Legion, Eagles Hall)

"Acoustics in these spaces do not support music performances."

"Many halls don't have risers or a stage, so sightlines can be difficult for producing a play."

"The halls typically have limited technical facilities and it is tricky to find the right lighting and sound, and at an added cost. There are portable sound systems in town, but the lighting is difficult to find."

Bars (Spirit Bar, Bloom Nightclub, Royal)

"Commercial music act get priority, would be tricky to book for an evening performance."

Churches (United, Anglican)

"Great for choir, recitals. But for theatre, lighting and sound systems have to be brought in making it less preferable as a theatre space."

Existing Facility Rentals in Nelson

Other Theatres (Shambhala, Civic Theatre)

"Shambhala at Selkirk College has amazing set up for music, lighting and sound technical components, but it is expensive to book, and a hard location to get people to go."

"Shambhala, expensive to rent and priority is given to the Contemporary Music students."

"The Civic is perfect for movies, screenings, sound system is amazing, but I'm not sure if you could stage a production there."

"If we are talking about wanting flexible seating, then the Civic has the same seating restrictions as the Capitol's existing theatre space."

"The Civic in its new iteration, needs to be considered as a potential facility rental, it hasn't met its capacity yet."

Discussions around other rental venues clearly indicate that there is no one space that meets the needs of all user groups and that multiple variables are at play when it comes to community groups looking to book space. Other miscellaneous rental spaces that also were part of the discussion included: The Front Room, Visitor Centre, Moving Centre, Hotel conference rooms, Oxygen Art Centre..

Partnerships

There is opportunity in developing partnerships to enhance the viability of this kind of project. The positive aspects of partnerships could include sharing in capital costs, reduction in site development, land ownership and design costs and the benefit of collaboration and raising the profile of each partner with the other's audience.

Potential Partnership opportunities include:

School District 8 – For education programming opportunities, youth inspired programming initiatives.

Local Indigenous groups – For outreach and community driven programming opportunities.

Selkirk College – For joint programming, internships and educational programming opportunities.

Regional District of Central Kootenay – Financial support based on value delivered programs, outreach and economic impacts.

City of Nelson – Aligned goals with supporting the local economy and focus on City's Focus Area (Arts Culture & Health)

Commercial industry partners – Partnering with business to explore corporate sponsorship opportunities to help fund construction and/or land ownership possibilities.

Conclusions & Next Steps

Overall, the Capitol Theatre is clearly upholding its reputation as the premiere performing arts venue in Nelson and area, however accurately estimating the use a new multi-purpose venue will have in the community and therefore determining its feasibility will require further investigation.

The 'want' for a multi-use Black Box style theatre has been clearly expressed by the community through the input collected out of this feasibility study, however the desire of the community to invest in the infrastructure and amenities requires further analysis. The desire of Government Funders to invest in Arts and Culture Infrastructure also requires further analysis.

We can infer that the 'want' for an additional theatre space comes not only from a shortfall in available rental venues and dates but primarily from the need of the community to have a place to provide the opportunity to further develop the performing arts and provide entertainment for the community.

This aligns nicely with the Capitol's mission of community enrichment through the arts. It will be important to integrate this use of a Black Box Theatre space for community use with any expectations around booking touring shows in this new space and prioritization. The results of the community input clearly indicate that 1. cost and 2. accessibility will be essential factors in the future demand for bookings. Focus Group section iv. and Addendum D together provides a comprehensive list of potential events and activities that the public is interested in supporting, but there will need to be a realistic expectation that the level of utilization will increase only as the venue availability becomes known and publicized and that it remains affordable for community groups and non-profit groups to rent.

There should be a strong focus on any new conceivable theatre space at the Capitol being true to the flexible theatre design that a Black Box implies and should include the following attributes:

- The capacity range should be smaller than the current theatre hall, to provide a more intimate setting and address the needs expressed for a smaller space. Capacity could range anywhere from 125 – 250 seats based on a more accurate financial assessment and architectural considerations when the time comes.
- The theatre space should be intended as multi-purpose in its shape and functionality, able to support all forms of music, live theatre, dance, film, art, popular entertainment and other events.
- The new theatre space should be equipped with a satisfactory range of proper theatre lighting, sound and other technical equipment as well as support for digital media.
- The theatre seating should be flexible in design, comfortable and retractable and provide flexible staging.
- The theatre should provide back space amenities for performers such as dressing rooms, a green room and washroom facilities.
- It would be desirable to have some back stage capacity for this theatre space.
- There should be some variance in rental rates for performance and rehearsal, non-profit and commercial.

Conclusions & Next Steps

Concerns to Address:

There was expressed concern by existing renters about the capital requirement to build a new Black Box Theatre and how the costs will impact rental costs.

Staffing considerations and the cost effectiveness of including front of house and technical support for the smaller space were expressed as possible solutions to keep rental costs down.

Concern was raised over the current Civic Theatre and its current renovation plans with regards to running overlapping capital fundraising campaigns if the Capitol decides to go ahead with a theatre expansion project. Further consultation around this is recommended.

Next Phase of Feasibility Study should include:

Business Plan

Develop a business plan to determine how expanded and improved facilities will support increased activity and in turn affect revenues and expenses.

Capital Campaign

From the business plan, initiate a campaign to determine what funds might be raised to support the project, including community fundraising and fundraising from all levels of government.

Seek Partnerships

Develop a task force specifically for the purpose of identifying and seeking partnership opportunities that would enhance the potential value of the project, determine and improve its long-term viability.