



**DANCE
VICTORIA**
THE WORLD'S BEST DANCE

111-2750 Quadra Street,
Victoria BC Canada V8T 4E8

DanceVictoria.com

info@dancevictoria.com
250-595-1829

Strategic Plan 2024-2027: Executive Summary

Our Vision

Everyone in Greater Victoria can experience the transformative power of world-class dance.

Our Mission

To cultivate a connection to dance by presenting and supporting diverse local, national, and international artists, and inspiring all communities through the magic of dance.

Our Core Activities

Presenting

For 27 years, Dance Victoria has served the Greater Victoria region. As one of the most prominent dance presenters in Western Canada, we bring diverse national and international companies to the Royal Theatre and McPherson Playhouse. Our core artistic values are excellence, innovation, and diversity of perspective and form. With the tagline "The World's Best Dance," we are committed to research, exploration, and relationship-building with artists that ensure we present dance at its highest level. DV proudly welcomes over 15,000 audience members, including 1,200 subscribers, annually. We also prioritize access to dance for equity-deserving communities and young people through various ticket programs (*Dance Is For Everyone*, *Nutcracker Kids* and *Pay Your Age*).

Complementing our presentations with engagement opportunities and welcoming access points is a priority. In 2023, DV invested in a new staff role by hiring a full-time Community Engagement Manager. This change has translated into increased organizational capacity for public programming, community partnerships, and relationship development that prioritizes equity-deserving and young audiences. DV's expanding community engagement efforts include free masterclasses and movement workshops by visiting companies, pre-show chats, and community engagement activities by DV Residency Artists.

Dance Victoria strives to create opportunities for artists representing IBPoC (Indigenous, Black and People of Colour), disability, and LGBTQ2S+ communities. From the *Dance at the Royal* series and special presentations; to our free, city-wide Dance Days Festival; to local artist support, it is a priority for Dance Victoria to reflect the vibrant diversity of local communities on our stages, and in our studios.

Supporting

Each year, Dance Victoria supports local and regional artists with paid residencies, free studio space, and performance opportunities. These programs were developed by DV leadership upon learning the extent to which studio access is a barrier facing Victoria's creative community as they approach the development of new work. In 2023/24, Dance Victoria donated over 1,000 hours of studio time to Greater Victoria dance artists.



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Since 2011, Dance Victoria has awarded two annual *Chrystal Dance Prizes* (CDP) for Western Canadian dance artists engaging in international collaborations and students pursuing training opportunities outside of Canada. The CDP is named for Dr. Betty “Chrystal” Kleiman and funded by an annual disbursement through an endowment held at the Victoria Foundation.

Dance Victoria’s Quadra Village Studios have become a valuable community asset. Throughout the year, we provide rentable studio space to local dance professionals for dance classes, rehearsal and dance-related events; to yoga and exercise instructors; and to a broad range of arts and cultural organizations in the community.

Our Process

The process for creating and committing to a new three-year Strategic Plan for Dance Victoria (DV) included 1:1 conversations with key partners; targeted focus group sessions with the dance community and young audiences; and a broad survey of subscribers, donors, sponsors, Board members and staff. In addition, we researched societal, arts and culture, and dance trends, challenges and opportunities.

This work was guided by the Governance & Planning Committee of the Board of Directors and staff leadership, with the facilitation of Macro Consulting. The process included the engagement of all DV staff and Board members and a consultation meeting with DV’s Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee.

The Strategic Inquiry phase of the plan provided key insights into the expectations and needs of our local communities. Importantly, this phase reinforced that Dance Victoria has been successful in serving our community and delivering on our mission. Looking forward, we have identified four strategic priorities, Dance Victoria’s Strategic Pillars, to ensure we meet and exceed the expectations of our audiences, regional artists, and broader community today, and into the future.

Under each Strategic Pillar are four Strategic Outcomes, expressed in present tense. For example: “We champion, support, and listen to local independent dance artists and companies.” The intention behind this choice is that, by the year 2027, we are committed that each of the outcomes described will be “undeniably true” – rather than a goal that we aspired to (“We aim to champion” or “We will champion”).

Our Challenges Ahead

While partner feedback and Board and staff knowledge were critical to making the strategic choices within this plan, we are also aware of external challenges and context that impact our organization. Specifically, we noted that our Strategic Pillars must reflect the realities ahead. Identified challenges include:

- **Finances:** Ongoing inflation affects all aspects of our organization, alongside a decline in Canadian philanthropy and the need to secure a broader group of donors and sponsors.
- **Audience Identities:** We have a responsibility to address the needs and expectations of multiple demographic groups and communities, embodying the lenses of equity, diversity, and inclusion.



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- **Reconciliation:** We have a responsibility to support and, where appropriate, actively take part in Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples in British Columbia.
- **Funder Priorities:** Relationships and values alignment with our funding partners (municipal, provincial, federal) are critical.
- **Venues:** We must work within the limitations of our current venues, while exploring alternative spaces.
- **Sustainability:** We are collectively responsible for environmental sustainability in operational and programming practices.

Our Core Values

Over Dance Victoria's 27-year history, the organization has been guided by a set of core values: Artistic Excellence, Inclusion, Curiosity, Passion, Conversation, and Respect. Through this Strategic Plan process, DV's Board of Directors and staff recommitted to these values, while articulating the following beliefs:

- We believe that dance is a necessity.
- We believe that excellence in dance is magical and transformative.
- We believe that live performing arts experiences and dance participation have the power to enrich community connection and belonging.
- We believe that generosity, care, and inclusivity are fundamental to all of our relationships.

Strategic Assumptions

The following are underlying assumptions about the next three years of Dance Victoria's Strategic Plan. These include our strengths as an organization:

- There is, and will continue to be, a love and necessity for dance – whether that's through presentations, experiences, learning, or opportunities for community belonging.
- We are committed to equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility and Reconciliation. These commitments will be reflected as core decision criteria for our organization.
- We can plan for the future from a position of financial strength, long-term sponsor support, and on the basis of DV's positive reputation.
- We have strong and talented staff and will invest in their wellbeing and career development.
- We can play a role in positively impacting the mental and physical wellbeing of everyone who participates in our offerings and who works with us.
- We are considered a critical leader in the arts ecosystem and have a responsibility to provide more intentional partnership and leadership.
- We are committed to sustainability.



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Dance Victoria's Strategy 2024-2027: Imagining the Future

Pillar #1: DEEPEN the IMPACT of our performances, programs, and relationships.

Strategic Outcomes to 2027

- We program into each season an increasing number of opportunities for artists, audiences, and the broader community to connect with dance on a meaningful level.
- We create multiple entry points for audiences to access dance through educational programming, resources, and engagement opportunities.
- We increase access for young people and equity-deserving communities through partnerships with local schools and community organizations, and allocate the resources necessary to provide these opportunities.
- We dedicate resources to support touring artists staying in Greater Victoria long enough to allow for meaningful community connections.

Pillar #2: INNOVATE through artistic risk-taking and new ways of thriving.

Strategic Outcomes to 2027

- We dedicate resources towards artistic research supporting Dance Victoria's presentation of world-class dance.
- We diversify our current funding and financial models so that we can push artistic boundaries, take risks, and – at times – fall short in pursuit of our mission.
- We pursue alternative performance venues and formats to expand the reach of our programming.
- We invest in non-traditional approaches to dance presentation and new technologies to connect with an expanding community of current and future Dance Victoria audiences.



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Pillar #3: BE A CATALYST for the vitality of the Capital Regional District's arts ecosystem.

Strategic Outcomes to 2027

- We advocate for dance through active partnerships and community engagement.
- We champion, support, and listen to local independent dance artists and companies, from emerging to established.
- We provide safe and welcoming spaces for the dance community to gather, inspire, and create.
- We collaborate and foster partnerships to become a core voice and presence in Greater Victoria's arts ecosystem.

Pillar #4: CHAMPION a sustainable, healthy and engaging organizational culture.

Strategic Outcomes to 2027

- We commit to equity, diversity, inclusion, and Reconciliation through measurable policies and procedures.
- We prioritize staff well-being with forward-thinking policies and practices that elevate employee satisfaction.
- We invest in technology, systems, mentorship, and development opportunities that foster workplace creativity and collaboration.
- We lead with thoughtful programming processes and best sustainability practices to reduce our environmental footprint while continuing to bring world-class dance to Greater Victoria.