



**VERNON & DISTRICT
PERFORMING
ARTS CENTRE
SOCIETY**

Vernon & District Performing Arts Centre Society
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2020 Annual General Meeting - Artistic Director's Report

The Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre Society (VDPACS) presented thirteen of our eighteen planned performances for the Spring of 2020 before the COVID-19 shutdown.

The first three months of 2020 were bustling with an array of live performance. We followed the adventures of Anne Shirley in *Anne of Green Gables – the Ballet*; we had the homecoming of the nationally acclaimed actor Jon Young in *Infinity*; and we introduced young children to their first theatre experience in a playful, inclusive and cozy way with Theatre Werde's *Hands and Feet* from Germany.

Tlakentli was a beautiful mix of theatre, dance and design which explored indigeneity, migration and identity. To help foster the next generation of artists, we brought a workshop led by the performers of *Tlakentli* into Vernon's WL Seaton Secondary's Senior Performance Class of fifty young students.

We sparked young minds with the popular *Hip Hop Hoop Dance* presented to 1,474 elementary students. Hundreds of children beat their drum sticks in the air with *SAMAJAM*.

When public gathering limits came into effect in March 2020, VDPACS adapted to the changes brought on by COVID 19 in three ways:

- 1) We provided artistic residencies for local professional artists to create and record new work.
- 2) We presented four sold out performances to socially distanced audiences of 46 people in a cabaret setting.
- 3) We upgraded our rehearsal space, the Marie Fleming Hall, into a live streaming and broadcasting performance venue, creating a safe space for artists to record and share their work. This led to the creation of our FOCUS Online Series featuring local artists.

FOCUS Online Series

With the support of the Canadian Cultural Spaces Fund and the Regional District of the North Okanagan, VDPACS purchased state-of-the-art HD video and digital sound recording technology. We also renovated the Marie Fleming Hall (our 65 seat underdeveloped studio space) into a small-scale live performance and recording studio. The added technical resources enabled VDPACS to live-stream, record, and edit media for online broadcasting on various platforms.

The current interruption in typical programming due to COVID 19 created the opportunity for VDPACS to explore, better engage, and showcase artists and organizations from the North Okanagan.

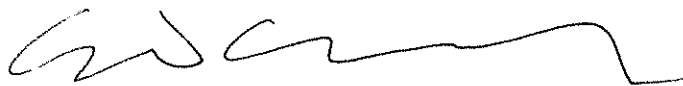
VDPACS issued a Call for Artists and Expressions of Interest (EOI) throughout the region and through them, selected twenty-two regional artists to perform in our FOCUS Online series.

Each public streaming broadcast included a variety of artists performing a 3-5 minute pre-recorded segments taken from their recording session. These created each 15-20-minute episode. The episodes broadcast for four days, every two weeks, starting on January 21, 2021. The episodes reached over 4000 views.

The FOCUS ONLINE series provided a platform for many local established and emerging artists to connect with audiences and gain exposure. These recording sessions also created a professional quality performance video that the artists will use to further develop their careers.

We would not have been able to deliver any activities during the COVID-19 shutdown without the support of the Government of Canada through their CEWS program. We are grateful for the funding from Canadian Heritage that supported the Society's presenting activities. We also received valued financial support from the BC Touring Council, both for Presenting and Youth Programming. We appreciate our local sponsors, for their commitment to VDPACS, and for their valuable contributions to our Presenting series. In addition, we would not be able to deliver these activities to our community without the support of our partners at the Regional District of the North Okanagan.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erin Kennedy', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Erin Kennedy
Artistic Director
June 11, 2020