



**VERNON & DISTRICT
PERFORMING
ARTS CENTRE
SOCIETY**

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October 16, 2023

VDPAC Announces Winners of 2023 Performing Arts Bursaries

The Vernon & District Performing Arts Centre Society (VDPAC) has announced this year's successful recipients of its annual Performing Arts Bursary Program. The three recipients of **\$1,000 bursaries** are **Kady Brandel, Anastasia Lutsenko** and **Amy Cuthbertson**, all first-time recipients.

Each year, the VDPAC Society makes available bursaries to Greater Vernon and area Grade 12 students entering, or those area students currently enrolled in post-secondary Performing Arts or Performing Arts Management programs; or in a recognized Performing Arts apprenticeship program. Under VDPAC's bursary program guidelines, students are eligible to receive a maximum of two VDPAC Performing Arts Bursaries over their post-secondary career.

VDPAC's annual Bursary Program is made possible from the generous donations by Performing Arts Centre patrons, tips collected at the coat check and at the bar & concession; as well as specified, tax deductible donations, sponsorships from local businesses, and memorial gifts by donors made throughout the year. The number and amount of the Society's bursaries relies on funds collected over the previous year and awarded based on the quality and need expressed in student applications.

"This 2023-24 year should be our first uninterrupted season since the pandemic," says executive director Jim Harding. "We want to grow our bursary program with the number of bursaries we can award, and also increase the amount we can offer, because the cost of post-secondary education can often be daunting and we want to help."

The Society's board of directors approved 2023 bursaries at \$1,000 each due to the high cost of post-secondary programs.

"We want to partner with our supporters, long time and new, and open-up the options of sponsored and donated bursaries that can be awarded in the name of a company or family," says Harding, "or in the memory of a local performing artist or dedicated Performing Arts Centre patron."

About the 2023 Recipients: *[See accompanying photos supplied by the recipients, with permission]*

Kady Brandel is a graduate of Vernon Secondary School and recipient of VSS's "Top Musical Theatre Student" (2021) and "Top Drama Student" (2018). She is a 1st year BFA (Theatre Production & Design) student at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, BC, who plans to complete her Master of Fine Arts, "shifting her studies" from performance to backstage for a career in theatre production and design, including as a stage manager with a desire to travel and tour theatre and musical productions.

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Locally, Kady performed and volunteered extensively with Theatre on the Hill, Centre Stage Performing Arts Academy, trained in Voice, Dance and Acting.

Anastasia Lutsenko of Coldstream is a 1st year Bachelor of Music (Vocal Performance) with a Master in Management (B&MM Program) at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC. “Nastya” has been an avid festivals and competitions participant in the Lower Mainland and at Provincial and National events, regularly receiving top marks, 1st Place awards, scholarships and bursaries for her Vocal performances. She has also participated in a number of Ensemble intensive programs and master classes, including Opera NUOVA, VSO Gala Flash Mob and VSO School of Music’s Opera Ensemble, and Vernon Proms Music Festival Masterclass with guest clinicians Leslie Dala and Alexandra Babble. Her goal is to become a professional “performer, educator and entrepreneur who can eventually serve and grow the performing arts scene in the Okanagan. My dream is to create more opportunities for local students to grow their craft and not have to move away to create high quality music.”

Amelia (Amy) Cuthbertson of Vernon is a graduate of W.L. Seaton Secondary (June 2022) and 27th Street Theatre in her 1st year of a 4-Year program at the National Theatre School (Production Design & Technical Arts) in Montreal, QC. Her future goal is to specialize in Lighting Design. Amy completed two summer student placements as a Production Assistant working backstage at the VDPAC. After her first term, she attended Acadia University (Technical Theatre–Production Undergraduate Program), and volunteered backstage with Acadia Theatre Company, (Fall 2022). She then returned to the VDPAC for her second summer term under the VDPAC technical director Jody Burkholder and artistic director Erin Kennedy, both National Theatre School (NTS) technical arts alumni, who inspired and encouraged her to apply and shortly to be accepted as 1 of only 8 applicants from across Canada into the Production Design & Technical Arts Program. Lighting Design has been her passion “since day one” and her dream job “would be working in London’s West End” theatre district.

“We have a very accomplished local community of youth theatre, dance and music programs here, which shows how important the Performing Arts are to our emerging young artists,” says Harding. “We want to continue encouraging them with our bursary program to help them explore and develop careers. So we will certainly need this year and the continued generosity of our supporters to help re-build our Bursary Fund to offer that much-needed support.”

Guidelines for VDPAC’s Performing Arts Bursary Program are available on the Society’s website at vdpac.ca and application details will be announced in the Spring of 2024.

For more information or to sponsor or donate to the Bursary Program, please contact the Vernon & District Performing Arts Centre (250-542-9355) or by email at: theatre@ticketseller.ca.

--- 30 ---

[See Accompanying 3 Recipient Photo files]

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