



**VERNON & DISTRICT
PERFORMING
ARTS CENTRE
SOCIETY**

Vernon & District Performing Arts Centre Society
3800-33rd Street,
Vernon, BC V1T 5T6
Phone: 250.542.9355
Fax: 250.542.9384

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 9, 2025

VDPAC Offering up to Five \$2,000 Performing Arts Bursaries

Applications Invited by May 16, 2025 Deadline

VERNON, BC—In addition to the building excitement of its upcoming 2025-26 SPOTLIGHT Season, the Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre Society (VDPAC), is offering its annual Performing Arts Bursaries for 2025, this year making up to five \$2,000 awards available for post-secondary education in the Performing Arts.

Graduating students from Vernon, Coldstream or Electoral Areas B or C who are entering into, or returning to full-time studies at a university, college, or technical school majoring in an accredited Performing Arts or Performing Arts Management program; and those students from this area already registered in a recognized apprenticeship program in the Performing Arts or Performing Arts Management are eligible to apply.

This year's program has an earlier deadline: Bursary applications must be received at the Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre **by 12:00am, Midnight, Friday, May 16, 2025.**

"This earlier application deadline will allow us to announce this year's recipients in time for local graduation ceremonies," says executive director, Jim Harding, "and publicly as part of our 24th Annual Birthday Bash on October 7th, prior to our official SPOTLIGHT Season opener, *Afrique en Cirque.*"

Updated Bursary Program guidelines and application form are available for download at:
vdpac.ca/2025 Bursary Program

"For graduating Grade 12 students applying to post-secondary Music, Theatre, Dance, Technical or other Performing Arts programs, this year's May 16th deadline may pre-date graduating students' formal notice of acceptance from their institutions," says Harding. "But these students can still apply for VDPAC's bursaries. Selected students will be required to submit a signed copy of their official confirmation as soon as it is received."

VDPAC has awarded multiple Performing Arts Bursaries each of the past few years "to assist and promote area students in their pursuit of post-secondary education and hopefully careers in the Performing Arts."

Bursaries are traditionally made possible by the generosity of Performing Arts Centre patrons from tips collected at VDPAC's Bar & Concession and lower level Coatcheck Gallery.

"We are always looking for ways to expand our bursary program," says Harding. "We are grateful for the support of our patrons with gratuities, which has enabled us to DOUBLE our bursary amount this year, but we are also wide-open to memorial gifts, legacy donations & corporate sponsorships for our program—all with 'naming' opportunities for annual bursaries—to be able to help-out more performing arts students from our region."

--- MORE! ---

The VDPAC's Board of Directors' 3-director Bursary Program Committee will review all applications and make award recommendations to the full Board by the end of May. High schools with selected graduating students will be notified and asked to include a first-time announcement of their recipient(s) as part of their year-end ceremony, school awards or bursary announcements in June.

Selected applicants already enrolled in post-secondary Performing Arts programs will be contacted directly. Traditionally, local families of all VDPAC bursaries are special guests at the Society's annual Birthday Bash performance, when the public announcement of bursary recipients is first made.

The annual Bursary Program is a key part of the VDPAC Society's ongoing youth engagement initiatives, which also includes summer student employment opportunities; youth FOH and apprentice tech volunteers; student 'community hours' opportunities; the "Student RUSH: Live for Five" discount ticket program expanded to include post-secondary students at Okanagan College; and other youth camps and outreach activities, including forthcoming "small" performance opportunities in VDPAC's renovated Marie Fleming Studio this 2025-26 season.

Recipients of Performing Arts Bursaries in 2024 were: **Zachary Friesen**, Vernon, BC (1st year, Degree CIF 2-year, Music Composition at the London Academy of Contemporary Music, Surrey, England); **Madison Irwin**, Vernon, BC (4th year, Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre Performance, University of Victoria); and **Nai'a Fellingham**, Coldstream, BC (1st year, Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre, University of Victoria). Students may be awarded up to two VDPAC Performing Arts bursaries over their post-secondary career.

To Apply: Visit the Society's website: vdpac.ca/AbouttheSociety/BursaryProgram to download the updated 2025 Bursary Guidelines and Application Form, including required support documentation.

Public announcement of the 2025 Performing Arts Bursary recipients will be made **October 7, 2025** as part of VDPAC's 24th Annual Birthday Bash pre-show celebration and SPOTLIGHT Special Presentation of Kalabante's *Afrique en Cirque*.

Inquiries about VDPAC's Bursary Program, or to sponsor a bursary, or to donate to the program, should be directed to the executive director at: theatre@ticketseller.ca.

--- 30 ---

Photos (Attached): **Zachary Friesen**
 Madison Irwin
 Nai'a Fellingham

Contact: Jim Harding, Executive Director
 Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre Society
 Tel: 250-542-9355 Email: theatre@ticketseller.ca