

Report to Finance and Corporate Services Committee

TO: FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE

PREPARED BY AND KEY CONTACT: O. GROVES, MANAGER OF CULTURE

SUBMITTED BY: O. GROVES, MANAGER OF CULTURE

GENERAL MANAGER APPROVAL: Z. LIFSHIZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR INVEST BARRIE

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER APPROVAL: CARLA LADD, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

DATE: MARCH 29, 2017

SUBJECT: MADY CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS AND GEORGIAN THEATRE PROGRAMMING

RECOMMENDED MOTION

1. That the report regarding the development of additional programming for the Mady Centre for the Performing Arts and Georgian Theatre be received for information purposes.
2. That Invest Barrie staff report back to Finance and Corporate Services Committee on the outcomes of the implementation of the additional programming for the two City of Barrie Theatres in the spring of 2018.

PURPOSE & BACKGROUND

3. The purpose of this report is to provide information to Council regarding additional programming being developed to increase utilization of its two City-operated theatres, the Mady Centre for the Performing Arts and Georgian Theatre.
4. In 2009 the City of Barrie's Culture Department assumed the operations of the Georgian Theatre, after the dissolution of the Gryphon Theatre Company. The Gryphon Theatre Company was a not-for-profit arts organization that the City of Barrie had asked to operate the theatre on their behalf, which they did for approximately 15 years. When the Gryphon started experiencing increasing financial difficulties the City of Barrie assumed the role of managing and programming the facility.
5. In September of 2011 the City of Barrie's Department of Culture opened The Mady Centre for the Performing Arts at #1 Dunlop Street West and developed an operating model with a community focus. The model serves to give first priority to local arts organizations. Culture staff has worked very closely with the 2 professional performing arts companies in Barrie, Theatre by the Bay and Talk is Free Theatre, to maximize programming at the theatres. Department of Culture staff have also developed relationships with community theatre arts organizations (e.g. Kempenfelt Community Players, OnStage) and local producers to encourage theatre rentals.
6. City Council expressed a desire to increase the number of days that the Barrie Theatres are being used. Staff set out to look at a variety of solutions to address this issue.
7. In reviewing the records of the past two years the Mady Centre was booked for 151 days in 2015 and 174 days in 2016. Georgian Theatre was booked for 135 days in 2015 and 140 days in 2016.

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8. In beginning to plan for more activity, in October of 2016 City Council adopted new fees to be added to Schedule M that would allow for the rental of the Mady Centre to corporations and local businesses for meetings and events.

ANALYSIS

9. The following initiatives are currently being undertaken or plan to be undertaken in an effort to increase utilization of the City's theatres.

The Plan

Part I – Corporate Functions

10. Since the Mady Centre was built, the Department of Culture has had a fundraising agreement with Cravings Corporation. Cravings sponsored the “Cravings Kitchen” at the Mady Centre for \$100,000.00 over five years and the naming rights are effective for ten years, which will expire in February, 2022. The catering portion of the agreement gave Cravings Corporation the exclusive catering rights and exclusive rights for the sale of alcohol and non-alcoholic beverages at the Mady Centre until February 1st, 2017. Culture staff is currently working with the Purchasing/Procurement Department to create an RFP for catering services to the Mady Centre for the Performing Arts.
11. In generating a new catering proposal for the Mady Centre City staff has had the opportunity to review past practices, critique them and determine a plan for moving forward that will provide service opportunities for traditional theatre events, as well as corporate and other functions. The RFP process will provide some flexibility to either work with one caterer by providing the caterer with exclusive rights to the bar and or food services, and/or to generate a list of preferred caterers for renters to select from. Staff will also be considering the possibility of having trained City staff operating the bar to determine if this could be a revenue generator for the City.

Part II Additional Programming

12. Ontario Presents is an organization focused on the Performing Arts including contemporary dance, comedy, theatre and music. Ontario Presents offers a block booking program that allows members to book acts through them that are travelling around the province. This program provides the theatres with the chance to acquire some stellar entertainment for a reduced cost, as the companies involved can save on expenses when moving from one community to another one that are in close proximity to each other.
13. Through Ontario Presents City theatre staff has booked several shows for the upcoming season as in Appendix “A”. The shows that were garnered from Ontario Presents were the *Glenn Miller Orchestra*, *Girls Nite Out* and *From Judy to Bette: The Stars of Old Hollywood*. The City was able to acquire a more reasonable price for the production as the travel costs for the show were lower due to the existing regional tour schedule.

Part III Partnerships

14. Staff has been reaching out to other municipalities that have venues of a similar size to the Mady Centre. Staff met with Krista Storey, the Manager of the Gravenhurst Opera House who works with a local producer to present shows over the summer months. Through Gravenhurst Opera House Company staff booked two shows, namely the *Old Wives Tales* and *Sexy Laundry* to be presented at the Mady Centre in 2017.
15. Another partnership that has proven fruitful is with Theatre Collingwood, managed by Erica Angus. Erica, previously from Theatre by the Bay recommended we present several shows that have been well attended in Collingwood. Consequently staff has booked both *Over the Rainbow*,

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by Adrian Marchuk – the lead singer of the Jersey Boys production and *Spin*, the incredible true tale of the first woman to ride a bike around the world in 1895 based on Erica's recommendations. Once again the pricing was reasonable as staff were able to book these productions while they are travelling across our region.

16. Additional partnerships have been developed with the Francophone community e.g. Vague de Cirque and Gabrielle Goulet. Staff reached out to La Cle de la Baie and as they have a francophone mandate so they have been able to book these shows for the City at an economical rate.
17. In the Women about Town series, staff are partnering with local businesses to create an experiential theatre program. When women arrive at the theatre for the Girls Nite Out production they will be treated to small gift bags compliments of Shoppers Drug Mart, tasty appetizers prepared by Cravings Fine Foods, the opportunity to purchase a glass of wine and the chance to purchase jewelry and clothing by downtown ladies shop, ZuZu's. The production of Spin will partner with a local yoga studio and a cycling club to encourage women to empower themselves through physical fitness.
18. In securing additional programming it is important to recognize that there is an inherent financial risk. Most of the aforementioned shows require non-refundable deposits. Department of Culture staff use their judgement and research to select programming that has established success in the surrounding region and matches the type of audience attending City theatres. The plan is to mitigate as much risk as possible, however the risk always exists that deposits will not be recuperated if not enough tickets are sold.
19. The plan to mitigate loss is to also investigate and utilize all possible promotional opportunities and drive ticket sales through these avenues. Ticket sales will be closely monitored and productions will be cancelled if it looks like they are not selling well and not going to cover the basic costs.
20. If all of the programs were presented and the City was not able to sell a single ticket, the City would suffer a total loss of \$39,229. The Princess Tea was recently presented to a sold out audience and tickets to Glenn Miller are selling well. It is reasonable to expect that one show may show a profit while another may run at a loss and they will balance each other out. Conversely if a show at the Georgian Theatre, that has a larger number of seats, has significant success the surplus can financially support the smaller productions at the Mady Centre.

Part IV – Educational Opportunities

21. Another consideration for increasing the use of the Mady Centre, is to view the centre as an incubation space. In reviewing City assets it is important to realize there are two theatre spaces that are fully equipped with professional lighting and sound equipment and that the City employs a host of qualified technicians that operate this equipment for theatre and music productions. It is recommended that staff explore the opportunity to provide an incubation space for youth that might be interested in learning more about this profession, that of theatre technician. Staff would offer "tech camps" to youth and young adults in an effort to educate and engage the younger members of our community in learning new skills and exploring employment opportunities.

Part V – Promoting the Theatre Space

22. The Culture Branch has been working in conjunction with the Tourism Simcoe County and partnered on a new online program entitled SpaceFinders. The County has taken the lead on this project by paying an initial fee of \$16,000 and the City of Barrie and other Simcoe municipalities are paying a small fee to maintain the site. The City budgeted for \$2,000 per year beginning in 2017 to cover this cost. SpaceFinders is an online tool that is designed to enhance the visibility

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of creative spaces throughout the region, and hopefully increase the rental of the space. Venues can market their unbooked rental space, while artists and the public alike can discover space based on location, price, amenities, and up-to-date availability. SpaceFinder is completely free for venues to list and free for renters to search.

ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

23. There are no environmental matters related to the recommendation.

ALTERNATIVES

24. There is one alternative available for consideration by Finance and Corporate Services Committee:

Alternative # 1 Finance and Corporate Services Committee could maintain the existing programming at the Mady Centre for the Performing Arts and Georgian Theatre.

This alternative is not recommended as it does not allow the facility to be used to its capacity, nor does it allow for opportunities for increase the use of the centre and attract future business.

FINANCIAL

25. The only cost that has been included in the 2017 budget is for SpaceFinders.
26. Staff is working with the 2017 budget to cover the additional programming but could experience a loss of up to a maximum of \$39,229. The risk of the City incurring the full loss is already not possible, as the Princess Tea was recently presented to a sold out audience and tickets to Glenn Miller are already 1/3 sold, which covers the cost of the deposit. It is reasonable to expect that if there is a loss on one or two shows than that would balance the success of other shows.
27. Staff will be budgeting for funds in 2018's business plan to reflect additional programming opportunities. No additional staff resources will be required to implement the recommendation.

LINKAGE TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

28. The recommendations included in this Report support the following goals identified in the 2014-2018 Strategic Plan:
- Vibrant Business Environment
 - Inclusive Community
29. Increasing the programming at both the Mady Centre and the Georgian Theatre, serves to enhance our community and provide more opportunities for downtown businesses, local hotels and restaurants. It also provides the City of Barrie with opportunities to partner with local business and profile them at our events. Increased programming also allows us to create positive relationships with the francophone community and provide training opportunities for our youth.

Attachments: Appendix A – What's New & Happening in 2017

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Appendix "A"

Mady Centre for the Performing Arts and the Georgian Theatre WHAT'S NEW & HAPPENING IN 2017!

Throughout 2017 the City of Barrie will be presenting many exciting shows at both theatres for the young and young at heart. Tickets will be available very soon at The Mady Centre box office located at 1 Dunlop Street West, or phone 705-739-4228 or visit www.barrie.ca/theatretickets

GLENN MILLER ORCHESTRA – April 25, 2017 – Georgian Theatre



The World Famous Glenn Miller Orchestra brings timeless classics like *In the Mood*, *Moonlight Serenade*, *Chattanooga Choo Choo*, *Pennsylvania 6-5000*, *String of Pearls* and *Tuxedo Junction* back to the stage. Even 50 years after founding his famous orchestra Glenn Miller's music is alive and well.

Over 20 musicians and singers bring the unforgettable Glenn Miller sound and perform those songs that everyone remembers... This is a show not to miss for jazz and swing fans alike or the incurable romantics who want to step back in time. The legendary Glenn Miller was the most successful of all the dance bandleaders back in the Swing era of the 1930s and '40s.

WOMEN ABOUT TOWN!

Call your girlfriends and plan a get together by joining us for these evenings out at the Mady Centre. Get a discount when you purchase a three show subscription. Single performance tickets are also available.



GIRLS NITE OUT – April 21

An all-star evening of stand-up comedy and improvisation! Elvira Kurt performs her stand-up act in the first part of the show, followed by the improvisation group - Girls Nite Out, consisting of some outstanding Second City alumnus: Jennine Profeta, Karen Parker and Leslie Seiler under the musical direction of the talented Kevin Baker. Elvira joins in the improvisation for the last part of the show. Grab a group, or just grab a friend, for this very special comedy evening.

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SPIN – June 9

Inspired by the incredible true tale of the first woman to ride a bike around the world in 1895, this epic cycle of songs and stories explores the early connections between bicycles, advertising, and women's liberation.

Award winning author, singer/songwriter, and theatre maker Evalyn Parry takes audiences on a musical journey from the dawn of the bicycle in the 19th century to her own experiences riding her bike through the streets of Toronto and Montreal. Parry's co-star is a vintage bicycle – suspended on a mechanic's stand and outfitted with microphones and sound equipment.



FROM JUDY TO BETTE: THE STARS OF OLD HOLLYWOOD – September 29

Judy Garland, Bette Davis, Lucille Ball, and Betty Hutton – trailblazers who refused to be “just another ingenue” during the golden age of cinema. An evening of scandalous headlines and marvelous melodies by critically-acclaimed Toronto performer Rebecca Perry. Rebecca takes to the stage to look at the lives of the ladies who broke convention and started something bigger, perhaps, than even they knew. With this affecting show, Perry shows that she not only creates her own marvelous characters, but beautifully inhabits the characters – perhaps even larger still than her own – that inspire her.

EXPERIENCE THEATRE

These three shows will take to the stage at the Mady Centre to delight and entertain this summer and into fall. Three show subscriptions and single performance tickets are available.



OLD WIVES TALES – August 2 to 5

Mother always said "he who laughs last is probably a she!" This show opens on a bride with jitters, her mother finally managing to extricate her from a washroom. Filled with practical wisdom, we learn that whatever you give to women, they will make it greater. Give her love, she'll give you a baby, give her food, she'll give you a meal...give her any crap and, well, be prepared to receive in kind! Filled with wit, and the driest of humour, be prepared to laugh, cry, and feel wonderfully human again.

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OVER THE RAINBOW – August 22 to 26 (written by and starring Adrian Marchuk)

Building on the great response we had with Adrian's production of "Any Dream Will Do", "Over The Rainbow: The Harold Arlen Story" is sure to be another musical delight, as we explore the life and iconic music of this fascinating man who wrote the music for The Wizard of Oz (although many are unaware of this).

Harold Arlen (February 15, 1905 – April 23, 1986) was an American composer of popular music, having written over 500 songs, a number of which have become known worldwide. In addition to composing the songs for the 1939 film The Wizard of Oz (lyrics by E.Y. Harburg), including the classic "Over the Rainbow", Arlen is a highly regarded contributor to the Great American Songbook.



SEXY LAUNDRY – October 4 to 7

Meet Henry and Alice. The kids have left the nest, life is good ... there's finally time for each other. So when Alice books a luxury hotel room for an evening of "Us Time", what could possibly go wrong? Probably nothing... unless you happen bring along a copy of "sex for dummies", then, all bets are off, and emotions sure to run high. Rough, raw, sincere, and ultimately tender, this achingly funny "one-on-one" strikes a chord for anyone who has ever been in a relationship.

2017 Pricing

Princesses Tea \$2,100
Girls Night Out \$3,000
Glenn Miller Orchestra \$12,000
SPIN Evalyn Perry \$3,500
Gabriel Goulet \$2,500
Old Wives Tales \$12,500
Over the Rainbow \$11,500
Vaque De Cirque \$15,000
Rebecca Perry \$2,500
Sexy Laundry \$12,500
Three Men in a Boat - partnership, shared revenue