

RED DEER
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

**ANNUAL
REPORT
2025**



RED DEER
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

LEADERSHIP

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

RDSO ANNUAL REPORT 2025

This past year has been an extraordinary season for the Red Deer Symphony Orchestra, and none of our successes would have been possible without the unwavering support of our patrons, sponsors, volunteers, and the broader community. Your generosity and commitment are the foundation of everything we do, allowing us to continue enriching lives through the power of music.

MAIN SERIES CONCERTS

At the heart of our season, four of six Main Series concerts once again reached “sold out” status, with more than 500 patrons filling the hall at all six performances. We were thrilled by this remarkable response to repertoire that spanned from Tchaikovsky to Handel’s *Messiah* to Canadian classics such as *The Log Driver’s Waltz*. This enthusiastic support reflects the strength of our community and the enduring vitality of live symphonic music in central Alberta.



COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING

Thanks to generous grant funding, our community programming remained free for all to enjoy—and audiences responded with tremendous enthusiasm. We presented three Symphony @ the Snell concerts in partnership with the Red Deer Public Library, along with two Community Concerts in distinctive venues.

A highlight was “Runway to the Holidays”, held at the Red Deer Regional Airport. This Christmas concert in the decorated Sky Wings airplane hangar—complete with a small plane strung with festive lights—was especially magical. We also returned to Bo’s Bar & Stage for a spirited Valentine’s Day performance, where the energy of the crowd matched the music on stage.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Inspiring the next generation remains at the core of our mission.

- **Choir Kids** engaged 800 students from 15 Red Deer and district schools. Families filled Gaetz United Church for four joyful concerts. One teacher captured the spirit perfectly: *"It is the highlight of the school year for me, and for many of our students."*
- **Music + Explorers**, funded by the National Arts Centre, brought our musicians into classrooms across central Alberta. Nearly 300 children discovered the magic of live music up close, often for the very first time.

ENDOWMENT FUND CAMPAIGN

This year, we launched an ambitious campaign to strengthen our Endowment Fund with the Community Foundation of Central Alberta. Established years ago but left largely untended, this fund is essential to our long-term sustainability, offering a stable source of income in a challenging funding environment. Our goal? Grow the fund to \$1 million by 2025. While we aren't there yet, the fund has already grown by more than 30%—and the year isn't over. With donations fully tax-deductible, we remain optimistic and energized for the months ahead.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

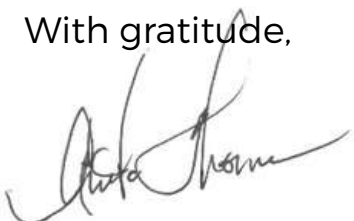
CITY OF RED DEER SUPPORT

We are profoundly grateful to Red Deer City Council for their ongoing commitment to RDSO. Last Fall, Council unanimously approved annual operational funding for the RDSO, reallocated from grants we had received in previous years. Unlike most grants, these funds support core operations—truly “keeping the lights on”. This investment has already allowed us to expand our 2025/26 programming, a difference our patrons will notice when we launch our 39th season with “A New Beginning”, featuring Tchaikovsky’s rousing Symphony No. 2.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I extend heartfelt thanks to our gifted musicians, our exceptional Music Director, Claude Lapalme, and our dedicated staff. Our Executive Director, Matthew Whitfield, continues to be the “ace” of our organization, and we were delighted to welcome Janelle Spady as our Marketing and Community Connections Coordinator in December. Together, Matthew and Janelle are a dynamic team, working tirelessly to ensure the RDSO thrives.

Together with our devoted Board, I look forward with excitement to our 39th season - I’m confident you will be as inspired and awed as I am.

With gratitude,



ANITA THOMAS
PRESIDENT & BOARD CHAIR





RED DEER
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

CREATIVE PROGRAMMING

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

MUSIC DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The 2024-25 season of the RDSO was, in many ways, a resounding success. It was a season of surprises in terms of the clear support and affection shown by the public, despite a conservative budget resulting in small orchestras and a reduced rehearsal schedule.

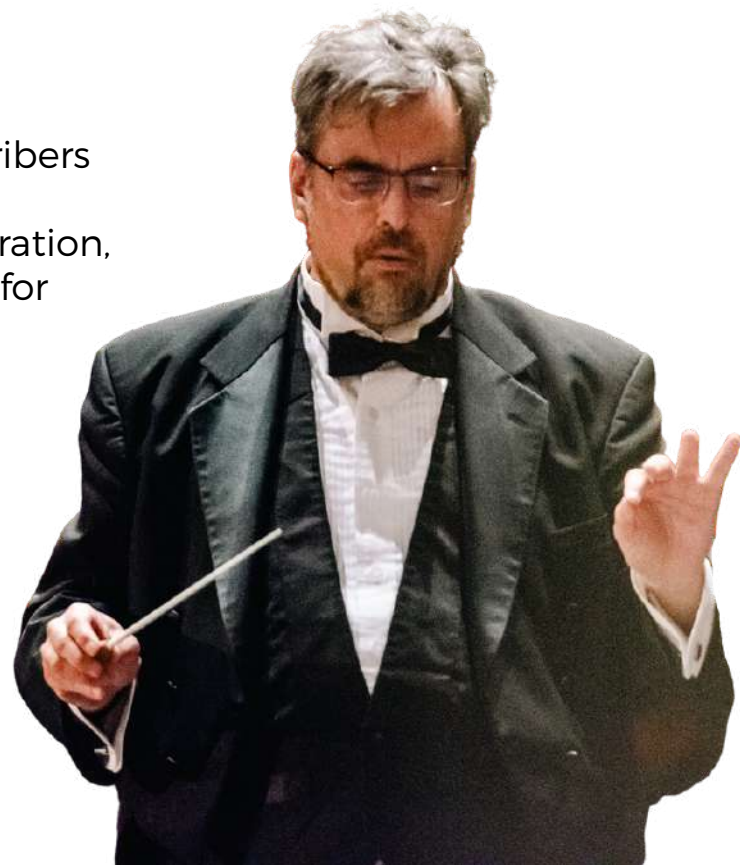
The fact that the season started with two local young musicians as soloists was very positive, and our second concert, which was strings only, was also well received. The *Messiah*, presented alongside Rosa Barocca, was a world-class performance and was again rapturously received. The new year did not disappoint either, with concerts in February and March being very well attended, even with a smaller orchestra in March. The large, season-ending Pops concert featured Canadian popular music as well as Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet*, making it a fitting closer.

Both smaller and larger groups were used for various community programming, with great interest shown by subscribers and non-subscribers alike. To top it off, Choir Kids was extremely smoothly run and popular. It is very easy to work well when you are dealing with talented administration, and I wish to give a my thanks to Janelle Spady and Matthew Whitfield for their constant support. While we still have to deal with some personnel lacunae in the orchestra itself (there are a few positions left to be filled), I am very much looking forward to this coming season.

Respectfully,



CLAUDE LAPALME
RDSO MUSIC DIRECTOR



2024-25 MAIN SERIES CONCERTS



The Red Deer Symphony Orchestra returned to the concert hall for its 38th year as central Alberta's flagship professional performing arts organization in October 2024. The RDSO performed a broad range of music to an enthusiastic audience across six Main Series concerts, with a unique and creative combination of music spanning centuries. From Elgar's *Cello Concerto* to Handel's ubiquitous *Messiah* and a concert of Canadian crossover masterworks, there was something for everyone, whether a classical music expert or a new audience member discovering this repertoire for the first time:

Main Series 1: We Rise Again

(with Kathryn & Sofia Fakeley)

Dubinsky: *Rise Again*

Tchaikovsky: *Variations on a Rococo Theme*, Op. 33

Vivaldi: *Concerto for Two Cellos in G Minor*, RV 531

Elgar: *Cello Concerto*, Op. 85

Main Series 2: Suite Serenade

Price: *Andante Moderato*

Holst: *St. Paul's Suite*, Op. 29 No.2

McLachlan: *I Will Remember You*

Suk: *Serenade for Strings*, Op. 6

Main Series 3: Messiah

(with Rosa Barocca)

Handel: *Messiah*

2024-25 MAIN SERIES CONCERTS

Main Series 4: Surprisingly Symphonic

(with Evangeline Kure)

Hemsworth: *The Log Driver's Waltz*

Bach: *Symphony in B-flat Major, Op. 3 No. 4*

Monn: *Cello Concerto in G Minor*

Haydn: *Symphony No. 94, "Surprise"*

Main Series 5: If We Had A Million Dollars

Page, Robertson: *If I Had A Million Dollars*

Bizet: *Carmen Suite*

Saint-Saëns: *The Carnival of the Animals*

Main Series 6: Symphonic Storytelling

Tyson: *Four Strong Winds*

Young: *Heart of Gold*

Mitchell: *Big Yellow Taxi*

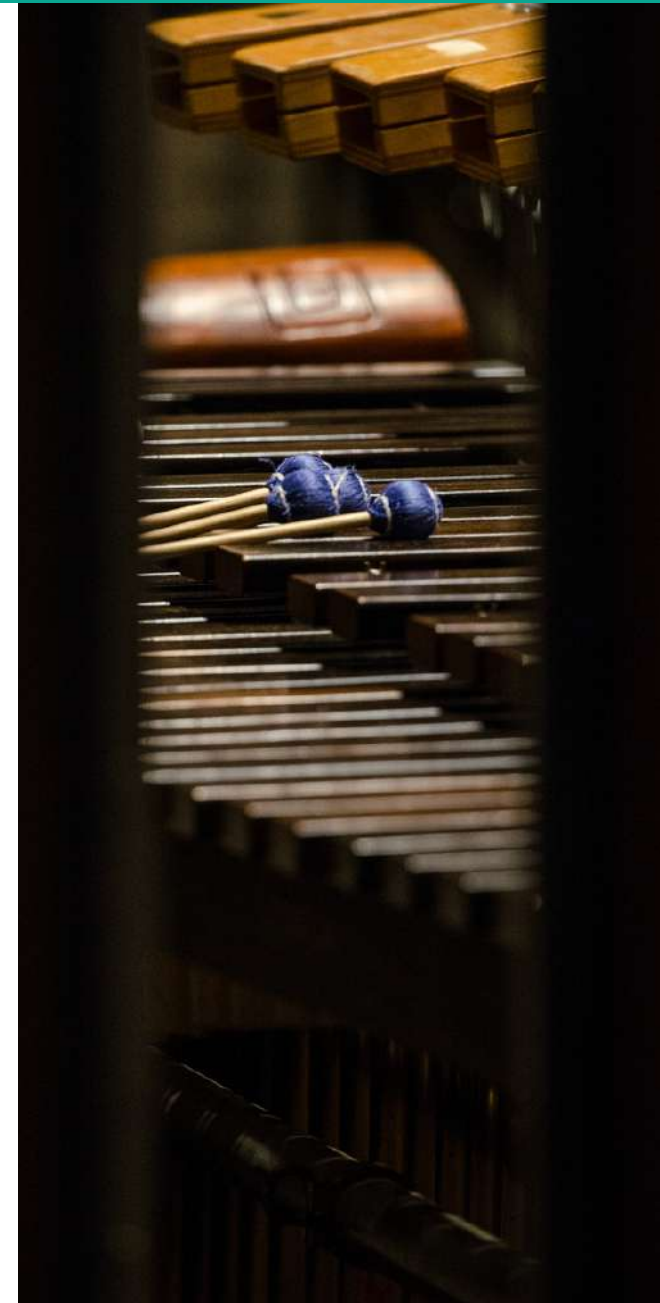
Vigneault: *Mon Pays*

Lightfoot: *Medley*

Bachman: *Taking Care of Business*

Tchaikovsky: *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture*

Main Series concerts are the primary means by which the RDSO fulfills our mission and mandate, presenting masterpieces from the classical music canon for an enthusiastic audience of subscribers, single ticket buyers, and community-based organizations. These performances provide central Alberta with unique musical experiences without the need for travel to Calgary or Edmonton, an opportunity that makes the RDSO a standalone and worthwhile fixture within Albertan culture.



TOTAL AUDIENCE NUMBERS FOR THE 2024-25 MAIN SERIES CONCERT SEASON WERE 3,243 OUT OF A POSSIBLE 3,354, WHICH EQUATES TO 97% OF TOTAL VENUE CAPACITY, UP FROM 89% IN 2023-24.

THE ATTENDANCE SUCCESS OF THE 2024-25 SEASON CONTINUES AN ENCOURAGING TREND OF CENTRAL ALBERTANS SUPPORTING THE RDSO THROUGH THEIR DISCRETIONARY SPENDING, DESPITE RISING COSTS OF LIVING AND A CHALLENGING ECONOMY.



CHOIR KIDS

RDSO's Choir Kids, a program that encourages musical creativity and expression in elementary school children, returned this spring for its 26th season! Each participating school submits two selections of choral music which are then arranged for orchestra by RDSO Music Director Claude Lapalme. Choir Kids 2025 took place on April 14 and May 5 at Gaetz United Memorial Church with four performances involving 15 schools and approximately 800 schoolchildren, as well as teachers, volunteers, and staff. These performances welcome the friends and family of the participants as well as our community at large, and approximately 1,700 people attended this year's performances.

Plans are underway for next season's Choir Kids, which is expected to take place in April and May 2026.

CHOIR KIDS WAS GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY:

JOAN DONALD & PETER AND KATHY LACEY



COMMUNITY CONCERTS

This season was the second year of Community Concerts, providing high-quality musical programming in unique spaces, with no admission cost for the audience.

Concerts were presented at The Red Deer Regional Airport (*Runway to the Holidays*) and Bo's Bar & Stage (*Roll Over, Beethoven: Love Songs*). Both performances were at capacity, included a strong ratio of new to returning audience members, and resulted in a number of positive ticket-buying behaviours: Individuals progressed from low-cost (i.e. low-risk), exploratory first-time concert attendees to paid Main Series attendees in a short period of time, demonstrating the value of the Community Concert series as a gateway to RDSO Main Series performances.

Community Concerts in the 2025-26 season include *A Christmas Carol* at Gaetz Memorial United Church, a Robbie Burns night at Bo's, and Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* at Westerner Park's chalet.



SYMPHONY @ THE SNELL

In 2019, RDSO launched a concert series entitled Symphony @ the Snell, delivered in partnership with the Red Deer Public Library. This year's community-oriented concerts included a performance of Halloween classics by RDSO strings, Philip Glass piano music with Matthew Whitfield, and RDSO violinist Catherine Butcher in a concert of classical violin repertoire, accompanied by pianist Karen Neary.

All three Symphony @ the Snell events were well-attended, attracted a diverse audience, and will be a core component of RDSO's 2025-26 community programming.

SYMPHONY @ THE SNELL WAS GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY:



MUSIC + EXPLORERS

Music + Explorers started as an after-school music enrichment program that worked with socio-economically challenged elementary school children. The program ran throughout the 2018-19 school year and was planned to begin again in the spring of 2020; due to school closures during the pandemic, this program was not able to run and was put on hold indefinitely.

In 2023, Music + Explorers was re-introduced as a series of traveling in-school workshop sessions, led by RDSO artist-educators including Samantha Whelan-Kotkas, Walter MacDonald White Bear, Naomi Delafield, Janet Kuschak, and Claude Lapalme.

The 2024-25 iteration of Music + Explorers was offered to schools throughout central Alberta with funding from the National Arts Centre, reaching three schools in three communities, with a total of 300 students in attendance. Music + Explorers remains immensely important and valuable for the RDSO, our musicians, and our communities, and provides an opportunity to connect with the next generation of concertgoers, arts lovers, and musicians.

MUSIC + EXPLORERS WAS GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY:



NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE
CENTRE NATIONAL DES ARTS
Canada is our stage. Le Canada en scène.



RED DEER
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ORCHESTRA



OUR PEOPLE

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The RDSO Board of Directors is an administrative board that guides the organization by setting policy, financing RDSO's operations, providing oversight for staff, and leading the work of committees.

The following individuals dedicated their time to fulfilling the responsibilities of the RDSO Board of Directors in 2024-25:

ANITA THOMAS, PRESIDENT

RANDY PATMORE, VICE-PRESIDENT

VANESSA MARIANI, TREASURER

BRUCE HENKE, SECRETARY

MARIE BUCHINSKI, DIRECTOR

KATHERINE BUCK, DIRECTOR

MORGAN MCKEE, DIRECTOR

LORRAINE SPROXTON, DIRECTOR

These individuals' efforts in working towards RDSO's success are much appreciated.

Additionally, the RDSO consults as needed with Evan Hardy, who acts as the organization's legal advisor. An annual review of RDSO's financial status for the 2024-25 fiscal year was completed by Cornish Harder Niederle LLP, supervised by David Niederle. The outcome of this process is the Review Engagement Report and Financial Statements presented as part of this report and at the Annual General Meeting each year.



COMMITTEES



The RDSO operated with an office staff of one Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) employee and one 0.6 FTE employee throughout 2024-25. As most orchestras of RDSO's size operate with three to five full-time staff, it is critical to the organization's ongoing ability to operate that the existing staff's work is augmented by the active and reliable participation of the Board, its committees, and their volunteers.

RDSO's 2022-2025 Strategic Plan involved amendments to the existing committee structure; consequently, RDSO operated throughout the 2024-25 fiscal year with the following committees:

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

LEADERSHIP & ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

ARTISTIC VISION

FINANCE & FUND DEVELOPMENT

ENDOWMENT SUB-COMMITTEE (AD-HOC)

ORCHESTRA PLAYERS

UNION NEGOTIATION (AD-HOC)

VOLUNTEERS

The work of the RDSO is carried out by the volunteer efforts of many: Committees, events, concerts, and programs are made possible by the countless hours given to the RDSO by our community of volunteers, and their commitment, talents, and ability to be our ambassadors are unparalleled.

Here are the people who helped carry out RDSO's mission behind the scenes:

**MARIE BUCHINSKI
KATHERINE BUCK
DE GALESLOOT
SHARI HANSON
EVAN HARDY
BRUCE HENKE
JANET KUSCHAK
CLAUDE LAPALME
TYMMARAH MACKIE
VANESSA MARIANI
GAETANO MAZZUCA**

**MORGAN MCKEE
RANDY PATMORE
BRENDA REID
KATHLEEN REID
DEBORAH RYCROFT
JANELLE SPADY
LORRAINE SPROXTON
LOIS TALLAS
ANITA THOMAS
ALONA TODOSIYCHUK**

Please forgive us if we have inadvertently left you off of this list!

The RDSO regularly requires volunteers to assist with events such as Symphony @ the Snell, Choir Kids, Community Concerts, Main Series concerts, raffle ticket sales, and more.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, there is someone at the RDSO office ready to speak with you!



SUBSCRIBERS



The RDSO returned to its standard membership model in 2022-23, changing the nomenclature from “member” to “subscriber”. This terminology is being further expanded to include “season ticket holder”, for greater ease of communication with prospective audience members.

Flexible subscription options were offered in 2024-25, in addition to full-season tickets, enabling subscribers to select three- and four-concert packages that provided an additional level of customization, resulting in 328 subscription sales in 2024, an increase from 298 subscribers in 2023.

Red Deer Polytechnic (formerly Red Deer College) continues to be a valued partner of the RDSO. This partnership is a result of both organizations working collaboratively towards best supporting the ability of RDSO to continue to serve our community. Mutually beneficial concessions with respect to venue use and student engagement were made in order to finalize a five-year partnership agreement between the RDSO and RDP that extends from 2022-2027. This agreement was amended in 2023 to allow RDSO to manage its own ticketing platform, increasing RDSO's ability to market concerts effectively and have direct contact with ticket buyers.



RED DEER
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COMMUNITY OF SUPPORTERS

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

SUPPORTERS

"No one can whistle a symphony. It takes a whole orchestra to play it."

~ H.E. Luccock

The RDSO is fortunate to have the support of many organizations, businesses, and individuals throughout central Alberta. Without them, our accomplishments would pale in comparison to what they are.

The following is a list of sponsors and donors that supported RDSO throughout the 2024-25 season:

LEGACY CIRCLE (ENDOWMENT FUND)

ANONYMOUS
ANONYMOUS
ANONYMOUS
MARLIES & LYNN BOOTH
JANET FRIESEN
BRUCE HENKE & ALLA MYSKO
TEENY MCCLOY
RANDY PATMORE & ELMER FLORENTINO
JASON STEPHAN
FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF THE
DR. BIRK SPROXTON MEMORIAL FUND

GOLD (\$10,000+)

JOAN DONALD
KATHY & PETER LACEY

SILVER (\$5,000+)

KEVIN & ANN WASCHUK FAMILY CHARITABLE FUND
RED DEER TOYOTA
RED DEER TWILIGHT HOMES FOUNDATION
SERVUS CREDIT UNION
SUNREAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

BRONZE (\$2,000+)

ANONYMOUS
BORDER PAVING
CHRISTINE SWIFT - COOPERATOR'S
THE KIWANIS CLUB OF RED DEER
LARRY MELNYCHUK & ARDYTH OSEEN
INGRID NOSSACK
MIKASA AUTOMOTIVE



SUPPORTERS

CRESCENDO (\$1,000+)

LISA BERRY
VELMA DICK
SHIRLEY HOVAN
DENNIS & LINDA HUEPPELSHEUSER
CHANDRA KASTERN
RICHARD & DIANE MCDONELL
CAROL MCLEAN
LORNA WATKINSON-ZIMMER
JUDY ROBINS WEIR

BRAVO (\$500+)

ANONYMOUS
DALE DICKAU
JEAN E FENNELL
CELIA HAYTON
TEENY MCCLOY
EILEEN MCKEE
ROSE MONEA
WILLIAM & PATRICIA SHAW
ANITA THOMAS

ENCORE (\$200+)

ANONYMOUS
DR. MAUREEN BAKKEN
NICOLE BARTOLAY
ROBERTA BIEL
PAULA BODNAR
SOPHIE BOUCHER
BARBARA CORMACK
MAC & DAPHNE DUNBAR
HEATHER SCARLETT FERGUSON
FRANCES HARE
VANESSA MARIANI
MORGAN MCKEE
ARUN MISHRA
MELROSE RANDELL
LEO RICHER
CARLEEN SHIGEMATSU
JOAN D SIMPSON
LOUISE WHITFIELD
GERRY & LORETTA WINIA
RONDO WOOD



SUPPORTERS

APPLAUSE (UP TO \$199)

ANONYMOUS
ANONYMOUS
ANONYMOUS
SHERRY ACKERMAN
JINNY ADAIR
JESSICA ALBRECHT
ROLAND AUCOIN
TRISTEN AULL
SANDRA BAILEY
KATE BAILLIES
JULIA BARBER
JANICE BARBEY
MILAGROS BARCLAY
CATHERINE BARNES
EMILY BERG
WAYNE BLACKMORE
RHONDA BOHLKEN
KELLY BRADFORD
MARLEE BRAITHWAITE
VIOLA BRAUN
JOY BRAUN-TRAUTMAN
TRISTIN BRISBOIS
ANNIE BUTCHER
RENEE CAMERON
JENNIFER CAMPBELL

CHRISTY CARD
PAULINE CAUFIELD
CHOON CHAI LEE
LORNA CLEMENT
SUSAN COLLINS
BOBBY CSKA
MYRNA DALZELL
MARION DAMIANI
TRACY DEAN
JOEL DELANEY
LINDSEY DOEPKER
KAT DOIRON
GRADA DROST
ROBERT DUNBAR
MIRJANA DUPALO
JOHN & JANE FERGUSON
PEARL FRANZ
LORRAINE FRIEDRICK
ALMA FUNK
MARY EILEEN GARDINER
KATHY GILBERT
SHARON GLADMAN
ERIN GUTSCHE
DANIEL HAAS
IAN HAGEL

JOAN HARRIS
CELIA HAYTON
AMANDA HAZLETT
ANNA HENRY
LOTHAR HORNIG
CHELSEY HORVEY
F. KEITH IBLE
JACKIE JACKSON
DAVID JAMES
FAYE PEDERSEN JONES
ALEXANDER JUNGK
BARBARA J LEE
PATRICIA LEITNER
ANGELA LEONARD
MARLENE LINNEBERG
TIFFANY LYNN
RENA MACDONALD
SANDRA MACGREGOR
RODERICK J MACLENNAN
SUSAN MAGUIRE
RORY MAXWELL
ELIZABETH MCARTHUR
ERIN MCDOUGALL
LAURIE MCEACHERN
KAREN MCGRATH

SUPPORTERS

APPLAUSE (UP TO \$199) - CONTINUED

SHEILA MCKAY
CAROL MCLEAN
IAN MCKENDRICK
STEPHEN MERREDEW
MUNEERUDDIN TAHA MOHAMMED
AARON MONTELEONE
MICHELLE NELSON
CAROLYN NEUFELD
CHARLES NORVILA
GARTH OLSON
DEBORAH OSHVALDA
BRIAN PARKER
LES PARKIN
DEB PARRY
RANGIE MAR PERDIDO
DEBORAH PEREPELITZA
ANTHONY PHILLIPS
DARLENE PHILLIPS
STEPHEN PIKE
JACOBO PINEDA
SHIRLEY PIRO
VOLODYMYR PREZLIATA
JUDY PURCELL
IVAN LEONARD PURDY
DIANA REED

KARISA RICHARDSON
KAREN E RICHARDSON
MICHELLE ROTH
ANDY RYNSBURGER
BETHANY SARGENT
EMILY SATNIK
NICOLE SAUVAGEAU
DAVID SCHABERT
EDWARD & FAY SCHATSCHNEIDER
MICHAEL SCHEIE
VICTORIA SEAVILLEKLEIN
STEPHEN & ANGIE SEBREE
DAVID & DOLORES SHACKELTON
YURIKO SHACKLETON
DANGUOLE SILEIKIENE
CHASIDY SIMPSON
GAIL SMITH
JULIE FREEDMAN SMITH
CRAIG STANIFORTH
MARGO STANIFORTH
TETYANA STENVIG
LORI SUNDE-COOPER
NICOLE SVITICH
TRISTA TAPPEN
DEE THOMPSON



SUPPORTERS



APPLAUSE (UP TO \$199) - CONTINUED

ROSE UNUAFA
MANGLESVARY VISVANATHAN
TERRI WACHTER
MIKE WAGAR
SUSAN WALKER
TRACY WALL
TRACY WARD
DAVID WEIZENBACH
JENNIFER WHALEN
SIERRA WILSON
MICHAEL WUETHERICK
MIRKA YARGEAU
SARAH ST. PETER
HENRI VAN DE WASSENBERG

GIFT IN KIND

AURUM LODGE
BO'S BAR & STAGE
BROWN'S SOCIAL HOUSE
CENTURY 21 ADVANTAGE
FLORAL EXPRESSIONS
GAETZ MEMORIAL UNITED CHURCH
MINUTEMAN PRESS
PATTISON MEDIA
PRAIRIE BUS LINES LTD.
SAWBACK BREWING CO.
SKY WINGS AVIATION ACADEMY
STATE & MAIN
SUNTERRA MARKET
THE CANADIAN BREWHOUSE
THE KEG STEAKHOUSE & BAR
THE RED DEER ADVOCATE
THE RED DEER REBELS
THE SNAP HAPPY PHOTOGRAPHER
TROUBLED MONK BREWERY

Please note that this listing encompasses support received June 1, 2024 – May 31, 2025. Together, we continue to make amazing symphonic music and education happen in central Alberta! We try our best to ensure this list is accurate and complete. If we have failed to recognize your support or have acknowledged you or your donation incorrectly, we apologize and ask that you contact the RDSO office so that we may correct our records.

GRANTS

The RDSO continues to receive federal funding from the Canada Council for the Arts. Due to Canada Council's revised schedule of upcoming core grant competition dates in response to pandemic impacts, the current grant cycle (normally triennial) is extended for two additional years, with the 2025 fiscal year marking the second year of this extension. In 2024-2025, under its Engage & Sustain grant program, Canada Council for the Arts provided \$23,500 in funding to support the operations of the RDSO, consistent with the previous year. An application for the renewal of this grant (2026-28 cycle) was completed in March of 2025; a response will be received in December of this year.

Provincially, the RDSO received \$52,038 in 2024-25 from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts (AFA) to support operations. The 2024 fiscal year was the second year of a three-year funding cycle (2023-2025) for operating funds from the AFA. The 2025 fiscal year is the final year of this cycle, and an application for grant renewal will be undertaken in the Fall of this year.

Perhaps the most noteworthy change in the RDSO's funding structure occurred in November 2024, when Red Deer City Council approved the re-allocation of \$47,000 from the Community Culture Development Fund (CCDF) for the orchestra's core operations, rather than for individual projects. The release of these unrestricted funds was a multifaceted victory for RDSO, and the culmination of a year of advocacy and significant public support.



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des arts
du Canada



Alberta
Foundation
for the Arts



THE CITY OF
Red Deer





The RDSO Endowment Fund is held and administered by the Community Foundation of Central Alberta (formerly RDDCF), of which RDSO is the designated beneficiary. In March 2025 the RDSO launched its “If We Had a Million Dollars” campaign, intended to increase the Lapalme Legacy Fund to \$1,000,000 and further secure the financial stability of the organization.

As of December 31, 2024, the Lapalme Legacy Fund market value was \$200,902 (up from \$134,287 in 2023) and the Canadian Arts Heritage Sustainability Program Fund market value was \$93,704 (up from \$84,705.72 in 2023). As a beneficiary of these funds, the RDSO was entitled to receive annual disbursements of net income earned totaling \$13,789 for the Lapalme Legacy Fund and \$8,599 from The Canadian Arts Heritage Sustainability Program. Given the RDSO’s strong financial position approaching the end of the 2024-25 fiscal year, the decision was made to keep these monies in their respective funds, where they will continue to generate returns while remaining accessible for disbursement if needed.



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The financial position for the Red Deer Symphony Orchestra in 2024-25 continued to reflect the positive trends observed in 2023-24. This season featured a significant increase in ticketing revenue, reflective of community support for live performances, as well as generous community programming sponsorships, in-kind donations, and the CCDF operational grant established for RDSO by the City of Red Deer. However, sponsorship revenue fell well short of budgeted expectations for a third consecutive year, the detrimental impact of which was mitigated by AGLC Casino revenues that were not anticipated in the yearly budget.

Production and program-related expenses remained unchanged, totaling \$340,987 (\$ 341,182 in 2023-24). Administrative expenses decreased significantly in 2024-25, totaling \$125,732 (\$203,292 the year previous); this is due to the addition of a \$69,000 marketing grant in 2023-24, which caused a sharp increase in advertising expenses that returned to baseline in 2024-25. The fiscal year ended with the RDSO reporting a surplus of revenues over expenditures of \$49,862; this is an increase from a deficit of -\$14,801 the year previous, and a year-over-year difference of \$64,663.

RDSO's long-term sustainability continues to be a crucial focal point. With the increased community support witnessed in 2024-25, the organization is committing to an expanded slate of concerts in 2025-26, featuring larger ensembles and a more comprehensive rehearsal schedule. This additional investment in programming contains inherent financial risks, and the continued efforts of the Board in advocacy and fundraising, and the staff's continued exploration of additional revenue sources, remain critical for the RDSO's ability to exist in our community for years to come.



The background of the entire page is a soft-focus image of a violin, overlaid with a dense pattern of colorful, fine-grained splatters in shades of pink, purple, teal, and yellow. The text is positioned in the upper left corner.

RED DEER
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

GOING FORWARD

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2025

Embarking on a revival mission, RDSO applied for and received funding from the Rozsa Foundation to complete an updated 2022-25 Strategic Plan. The RDSO worked with Finley & Associates to complete this project throughout 2021-22, with 2022-23 marking the first season of implementation. This Strategic Plan, originally scheduled for renewal in 2025, has been extended for one year and will be reassessed in 2026.

VALUES

Values are fundamental principles and beliefs that serve as implicit criteria guiding all actions and decision-making.

RDSO'S VALUES:

- Community Leadership
- Diversity
- Creativity
- Resiliency
- Collaborative
- Local



**FINLEY +
ASSOCIATES**
STRATEGY. ACTION. IMPACT.



STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2025

VISION

The vision states the desired future state.

RDSO'S VISION:

Igniting passion for arts and culture in central Alberta.

MISSION

The mission communicates the distinctive identity or purpose the RDSO seeks.

RDSO'S MISSION:

A community-oriented professional performing arts leader dedicated to engaging, educating, and inspiring central Alberta through music.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- “Let go of the ordinary”
- Ignite passion for arts and culture in central Alberta
- Leader in community building through music in central Alberta
- Help to facilitate the growth of performing arts in central Alberta



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GOALS

Goals are ideal states to be achieved some time in the future.

RDSO'S GOALS:

1. Re-imagine the role of a symphony orchestra in community building.
2. Collaborate, curate, and create classical music experiences.
3. Foster career pathways for local professional musicians through community connection and mentorship.
4. Foster and inspire a vibrant arts and culture sector in central Alberta.
5. Contribute to making central Alberta a great place to live.
6. Deliver accessible and diverse performances, support music education, establish strategic partnerships, and build engagement through central Alberta.
7. Be operationally sustainable (i.e., human, financial, and cultural).



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STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2025

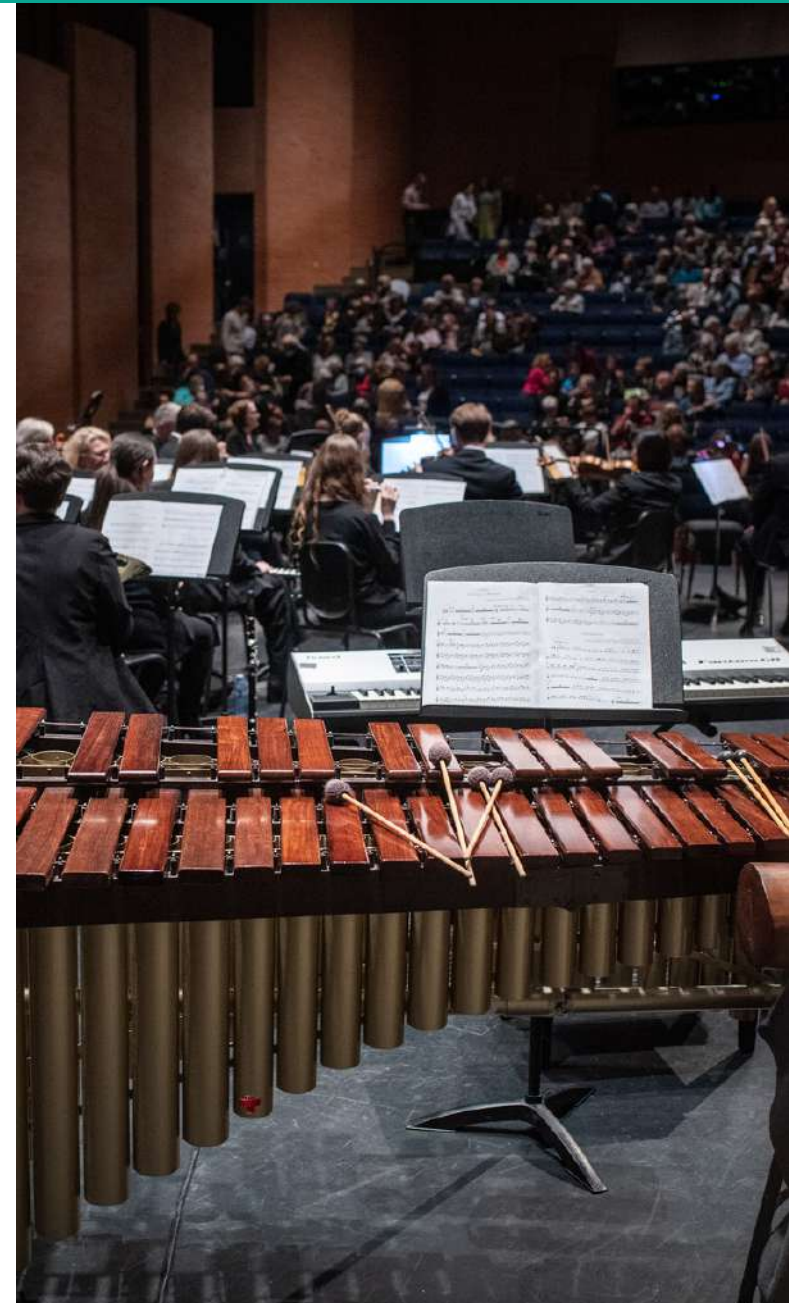
KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Key Success Factors (KSFs) are conditions that when properly maintained or managed, significantly impact the organization's ability to achieve its vision. RDSO has identified several Key Success Factors:

1. Artistic Vision
2. Community Engagement
3. Community Leadership
4. Organizational Networks
5. Infrastructure
6. Evidence-driven
7. Local



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KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2024-25

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are measures used to gauge performance against the Goals and Key Success Factors. The following is a summary of 2024-25 as per the RDSO's Key Performance Indicators.

1. TOTAL PERFORMANCES

- Main Series 1 – We Rise Again: 4 services; 3 rehearsals, 1 performance
- Main Series 2 – Suite Serenade: 4 services; 3 rehearsals, 1 performance
- Main Series 3 - Messiah: 1 performance
- Main Series 4 - Surprisingly Symphonic: 4 services; 3 rehearsals, 1 performance
- Main Series 5 - If We Had A Million Dollars: 4 services; 3 rehearsals, 1 performance
- Main Series 6 - Symphonic Storytelling: 2 services; 1 rehearsal (+OT), 1 performance

2. PERFORMANCE REVENUE

Sponsorship, subscriptions, and single tickets. Budget vs. actual per concert:

MAIN SERIES CONCERT	BUDGET	ACTUAL
We Rise Again	\$24,699.67	\$25,412.07
Suite Serenade	\$25,749.67	\$23,821.93
Messiah	\$30,999.67	\$26,802.67
Surprisingly Symphonic	\$25,749.67	\$29,007.00
If We Had a Million Dollars	\$25,749.67	\$25,175.09
Symphonic Storytelling	\$28,749.67	\$28,370.74

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2024-25

3. PERFORMANCE EXPENSES

Budget vs. actual per concert:

MAIN SERIES CONCERT	BUDGET	ACTUAL
We Rise Again	\$28,893.00	\$29,814.89
Suite Serenade	\$18,649.00	\$17,255.61
Messiah	\$12,800.00	\$8,661.30
Surprisingly Symphonic	\$24,311.00	\$23,168.61
If We Had a Million Dollars	\$14,641.00	\$14,280.78
Symphonic Storytelling	\$23,684.00	\$23,114.47

4. TOTAL AUDIENCE

Main Series 1: 304 subscriptions; 167 single tickets; 74 complimentary = 545 (Total)

Main Series 2: 305 subscriptions; 132 single tickets; 71 complimentary = 508 (Total)

Main Series 3: 309 subscriptions; 191 single tickets; 26 complimentary = 526 (Total)

Main Series 4: 308 subscriptions ; 187 single tickets; 68 complimentary = 561 (Total)

Main Series 5: 313 subscriptions; 159 single tickets; 70 complimentary = 542 (Total)

Main Series 6: 318 subscriptions; 175 single tickets; 68 complimentary = 561 (Total)

TOTAL LIVE CONCERT ATTENDANCE = 3,243



KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2024-25



5. INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS

Cash donations in 2024-25 totaled \$35,700, slightly under the \$39,000 budgeted for the year. This figure does not include in-kind contributions or concert sponsorships.

6. ENDOWMENT DONATIONS

The RDSO received \$50,500 in donations to the Lapalme Legacy Fund in 2024, thanks in large part to an anonymous bequest of \$50,000. These funds will be eligible for matching by the Canadian Arts & Heritage Sustainability Fund in the 2025-26 season.

7. SPONSORS

SUMMARY	BUDGET	ACTUAL
Season Sponsor	\$10,000	\$0
Concert Sponsors	\$30,000	\$20,000
Choir Kids	\$3,000	\$30,000
Music for Mental Health	\$3,000	\$3,000
Seats for Students	\$3,000	\$2,500
Total	\$49,000	\$55,500

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2024-25

8. MUNICIPAL GRANT REVENUE (CITY OF RED DEER)

SOURCE	BUDGET	ACTUAL
Operations	\$0	\$47,000
Choir Kids	\$15,000	\$0
Community Concerts	\$20,000	\$0
Symphony @ the Snell	\$12,000	\$0
Total	\$47,000	\$47,000

9. FEDERAL & PROVINCIAL GRANT REVENUE

SOURCE	BUDGET	ACTUAL
Canada Council for the Arts	\$23,500	\$23,500
Alberta Foundation for the Arts	\$52,398	\$52,398
Total	\$75,898	\$75,898



SO WHAT, NOW WHAT?

A key part of meeting the goals laid out in the Strategic Plan are the RDSO's priorities over a three year period. In order to efficiently work on the strategic priorities, the RDSO has developed and acted on the following:

IMPLEMENTATION PLANS 2022-2025*

Strategic Priority #1: Long-Term Planning For People

Building leadership capacity within RDSO

- Develop a Board Recruitment Strategy, including updating the Skills Matrix
- Develop a Board Chair Recruitment Plan
- Develop a Committee Member Recruitment Strategy
- Introduce a Board Evaluation and develop a 2-year Action Plan to address performance gaps

Develop a Succession Plan for the Music Director and Executive Director

- Short-term illness
- Long-term illness
- Planned retirement
- Untimely departure

Continue to strengthen the capacity and infrastructure of the organization

- Develop high-level action plans for board committees
- Diversify revenue

**The 2022-2025 Strategic Plan has been extended for another year, into 2026. The next Strategic Plan is expected to encompass 2027-2029.*

SO WHAT, NOW WHAT?

Strategic Priority #2: Grow Community Connection

Re-orient the RDSO to reach a broader community

- Undertake further analysis of Comparators and Competitors
- Develop a Segmentation Hypothesis of current and potential audiences
- Conduct market research to identify who RDSO is attracting and not attracting but could
- Develop a strategy to draw people in from YYC and YEG
- Explore ways to rebrand that would allow RDSO to better reflect its desired position in central Alberta

Identify and prioritize strategic partnerships that grow financial support for the RDSO

- Develop a Membership Strategy
- Develop a Donor/Sponsorship Strategy
- Develop a Volunteer Management Strategy

Diversify programming to target core and growth audience segments

- Rethink timing/length of season
- Develop a Signature Venue programming strategy (e.g., Red Deer Polytechnic Arts Centre - Red Deer; Loughheed Centre - Camrose; Gaetz Memorial United Church - Red Deer)
- Explore unique venue opportunities for the RDSO

Develop an Education Outreach Strategy

- Within schools
- Within new communities in central Alberta (e.g. Paintearth)

Prepare an Economic Impact Study/benefits that the RDSO can demonstrate to the City of Red Deer and other counties

- Advocate for the importance of the RDSO to the central Alberta community

SO WHAT, NOW WHAT?

Strategic Priority #3: Grow Musician Talent Pool Within Central Alberta

Identify and prioritize strategic partnerships that develop the professional music talent pool in central Alberta

- Develop a partnership strategy that networks with central Alberta music festivals
- Develop a partnership strategy that engages music teachers in central Alberta (e.g., Alberta Registered Music Teachers Association)
- Identify local rehearsal venue(s) within Red Deer

Proactively recruit 'local' musicians from central Alberta (i.e., within 80 km radius of Red Deer)

- Formalize long-term recruitment strategy for musicians
- Establish long-term recruitment targets to increase representation from central Alberta
- Explore opportunities to establish a musician recruitment strategy with post-secondary institutions offering music performance degrees/credentials within central Alberta



THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE VISUAL IDENTITY AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR THE RED DEER SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA HAS BEEN SUPPORTED BY FUNDING FROM THE ALBERTA FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS, THE ROSZA FOUNDATION, AND THE CITY OF RED DEER.

THANK YOU FOR BELIEVING IN THE WORK WE DO AND THE CULTURAL VALUE WE BRING TO THE COMMUNITY!



In the spirit of reconciliation, the Red Deer Symphony Orchestra acknowledges that it works, practices, and performs on traditional territories represented by Treaties Six and Seven, which is also an historic Metis gathering site. We respect the histories, languages, and cultures of First Nations, Metis, Inuit, and all the First Peoples of Canada. We acknowledge that their footsteps have marked these lands for centuries and their respectful stewardship has enabled us all to enjoy the riches of these lands.