



 **FirstOntario**
PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE
20/21 ANNUAL REPORT

ARTIST: CRIS DERKSEN with ADAM CK VOLLUCK | PHOTO: ADAM CK VOLLUCK

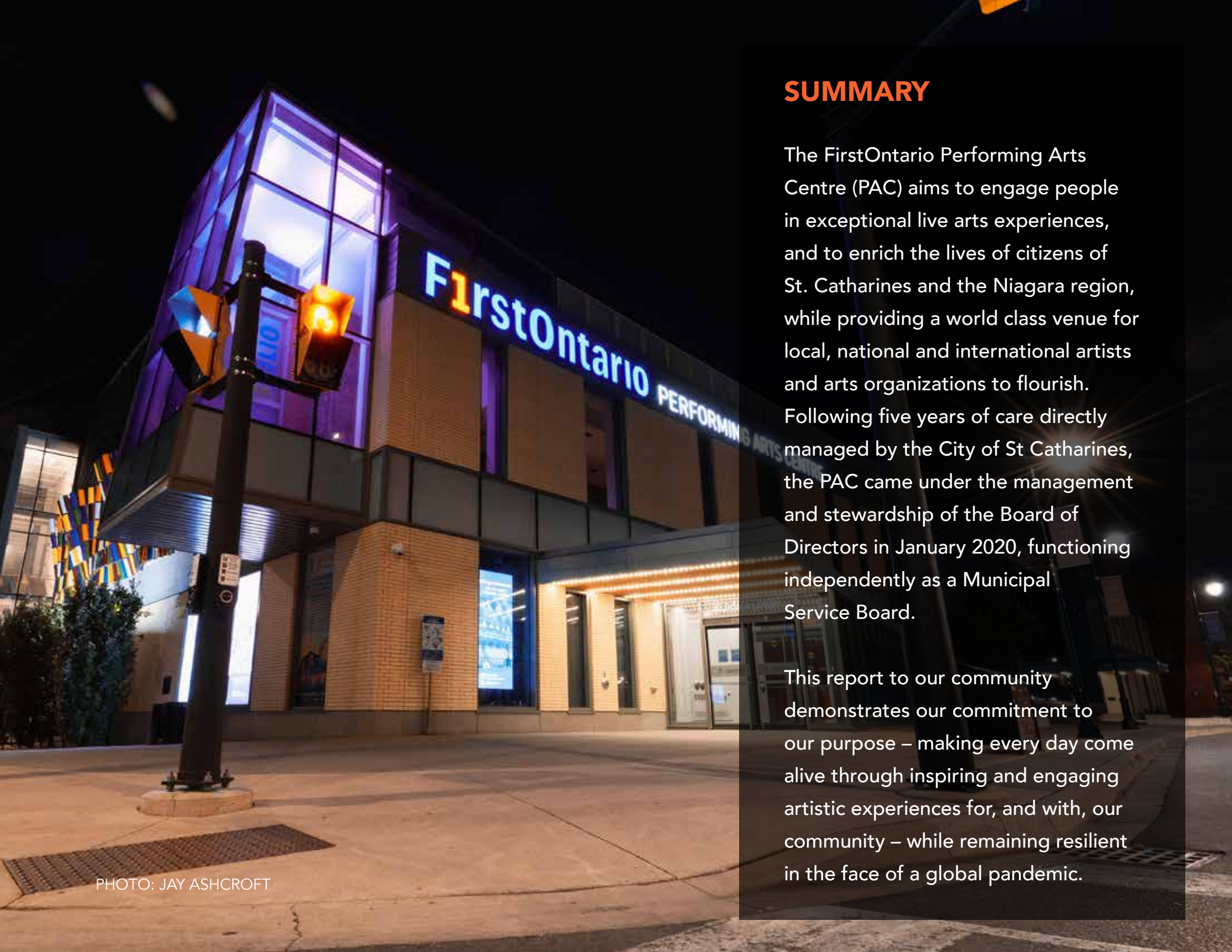


PHOTO: JAY ASHCROFT

SUMMARY

The FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre (PAC) aims to engage people in exceptional live arts experiences, and to enrich the lives of citizens of St. Catharines and the Niagara region, while providing a world class venue for local, national and international artists and arts organizations to flourish. Following five years of care directly managed by the City of St Catharines, the PAC came under the management and stewardship of the Board of Directors in January 2020, functioning independently as a Municipal Service Board.

This report to our community demonstrates our commitment to our purpose – making every day come alive through inspiring and engaging artistic experiences for, and with, our community – while remaining resilient in the face of a global pandemic.

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO AND CHAIR



**COLLEEN
SMITH**
CEO

Arriving at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre on 4 May 2020, I never could have imagined the road ahead. Thanks to an incredible team, an amazingly supportive Board of Directors, and a resilient community, the PAC has not only withstood the pandemic, but has used this prolonged moment of 'pause' to chart out a course for our collective future. As the home for the arts in Niagara, we have rallied to support our artists, our arts organizations, and our arts workers and volunteers. We have emerged triumphantly with a strategic recovery plan, a strong sense of purpose, and a renewed commitment to provide the very best in arts, culture and creativity for our community.



**MARIO
DE DIVITIIS**
CHAIR

January 2020 marked a new beginning for the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre as the Board began their stewardship of this beautiful arts hub. Throughout our first two years we have witnessed the power of community, the necessity of strong partnerships and the importance of supporting one another in the greatest time of need. I am very proud of the PAC team and all that they have accomplished in this short time. I am also very proud of my fellow Board members and their unwavering support of this incredible institution and the important work we do for, and with our community. Bravo.



PERFORMANCE: SKÉN:NEN | PHOTO: DAVID HOU

MANDATE

As a convener of arts, culture, and creativity, we are stewards of the beautiful multi-venue facility that is the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, and uphold a mandate which encompasses the following three pillars:

1

To advance the development of, and access to, arts and culture as a proud and sustainable developer, presenter, supporter and incubator of talent, creativity, and knowledge building for our diverse community.

We do this through:

- programming of arts and culture in live performance settings, film and digital expressions;
- providing supportive opportunities and platforms for showcasing the stories and talents of Indigenous Peoples and equity-seeking groups;
- fostering the creation of memorable, intergenerational experiences;
- being a place for creative inspiration, presentation and exploration;
- providing a home for learning, experimenting and growth;
- incubating local, regional and national talent.

The PAC operates in respect of the following external values:

Art, Artists and the Creative Process; Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility; Knowledge Building and Creative Exploration; Community Leadership and Partnerships.

As co-creators of our future success, we also value our partners: the City of St. Catharines, Brock University, and our regional, national and international arts community.

2

To provide infrastructure, support, growth and innovation opportunities for local and regional artists, arts workers and community organizations.

We do this by:

- being a physical home for live, creative work;
- being a place for community convening;
- taking a leadership role in arts advocacy;
- providing organizational support services and professional, highly trained staff in support of marketing, promotion and technical needs;
- generating funds to support local arts groups (SCCIP – St. Catharines Cultural Investment Program);
- encouraging knowledge transfer and exploring opportunities for learning, experimentation, and growth.

3

To contribute to the enhancement of a vibrant, healthy and creative downtown St Catharines.

This is possible because of:

- our professional, purpose-built facility that houses arts, culture and learning experiences;
- our ability to host a multitude of events and performances in our five venues on an annual basis;
- our responsibility to create a safe and inclusive space for community gatherings;
- embracing our role as a hub for cultural expression and celebration of all ages;
- our partnerships with the City of St Catharines and Brock University;
- our commitment as a team to a world free from oppression, racism, discrimination and intolerance.

A LOOK BACK AS WE LOOK AHEAD

The global pandemic affected our community and our work in ways that we could have never imagined. Our team continued to work diligently to find alternative ways to engage with artists, audiences and community in the digital landscape and in-venue programming when we were able to do so. Despite the challenge of the times, we remained open for opportunity and collaboration.

CELEBRATION OF NATIONS (virtual 2020 + hybrid 2021)

- \$185,000 paid in artist fees
- 52,000 online views
- 300 Artists, Knowledge Keepers and Elders shared virtually and/or in person
- 43 Global Partners helped us spread the word

101 DEWEGUNS LIVING HEARTS LEGACY, EST. 2020

- Project co-created by Elders Jackie Labonte and Oliver Nobosin, encouraging open reconciliation dialogue
- 13 member local steering committee
- Vision to drum coast to coast to coast in Fall 2023

GORD'S LEGACY (2020 + 2021, virtual)

In support of The Gord Downie and Chanie Wenjack Fund

- \$10,000+ raised for the Downie Wenjack Fund
- 2 virtual concerts, 15,000 views nationally
- 80 artists feature

#NIAGARA PERFORMS (2020, virtual)

- 40 episodes over 5 months
- 106 local artists and partners
- \$15,000 paid in local artists fees
- 80,000 online views

ARTIST: 101 DEWEGUNS



ARTIST: LAUREL MINNES - MINUSCULE

THE STORY OF 2020 AND 2021

EMANCIPATION DAY STC (2020 virtual + 2021 hybrid)

- Collaboration with Matter of Black and Black Owned 905
- 28,000 online views + 250 attendees at St. Paul Street concert of LMT Connection with Tabitha Lewis
- 40 artists + speakers showcased

FREE OUTDOOR PROGRAMMING IN THE MANN RACEWAY PLAZA (2020)

- Free outdoor concerts and film screenings in our backyard attended by over 1,000 patrons

SUMMER PACnic + 5th Anniversary Concert (Aug and Dec 2020)

- Virtual concert fundraiser and donor recognition event featuring Royal Wood and the Niagara Symphony Orchestra
- 5th Anniversary Concert featured Ron Sexsmith with the Niagara Symphony Orchestra in a hybrid format

DIGITAL SUMMIT: EXPLORING THE DIGITAL NEEDS OF NIAGARA'S ARTS COMMUNITY (Jan - Feb 2021, virtual)

- 350 participants, 23 presenters
- Project Advisors - Sara Diamond, President Emerita of OCADU + Shannon Kitchings, Local Artist/Facilitator/Changemaker
- Support through Canada Council for the Arts Digital Strategy Fund

LOCAL REFLECTIONS ON RACISM

(Sept 2020 - March 2022, virtual)

- In partnership with Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre and Niagara Region Anti-Racism Association
- 8 free virtual programs amplifying IBPOC and LGBTQIA+ voices

PAIRINGS (Oct-Nov 2021, hybrid)

- 6-show series paired local and national artists for intimate in-person/virtual musical performances
- 44 artists showcased, many live arts workers employed
- Funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage Support for Workers in Live Arts and Music Sectors Fund



ARTIST: LYDIA COLLINS



ARTIST: WARREN CLARK

2020 STATISTICS

50 live shows
14,269 attendees

97 film presentations
6,687 attendees

\$353,877 in professional fees
paid to artists

119 online/virtual
presentations

141,696 online/virtual
attendees

16 rental clients

32 rental days

\$41,000 provided to community
in COVID rent relief and fee reduction

\$264,760 received from federal,
provincial and regional bodies to
support programming activities

\$8,100 received from federal,
provincial and regional bodies
for COVID relief and recovery

2020 HIGHLIGHTS

Jan-Feb: En route to a record-breaking year of events and activities.

March-April: 13 March 2020 closure and immediate online pivot to support artists and maintain our connection through #NiagaraPerforms and online Film offerings.

May-June: Arrival of new CEO, Colleen A. Smith; beginning of articulating our COVID-19 strategy; recognizing the urgency of action in response to BLM, equity, diversity and inclusion.

July-Aug: Welcoming audiences safely in our backyard (the Mann Raceway); collaborating with Matter of Black, Black Owned 905, Folk Arts Multicultural Centre, Brock University and others for the beginning of online race discussions and forums; holding our first virtual fundraiser and donor recognition event featuring Royal Wood and the Niagara Symphony Orchestra.

September: Celebration of Nations goes virtual; performances and discussions continue online.

Oct-Nov-Dec: Virtual programming continues and in-person programming resumes, highlights include Indigenous Cellist Cris Derksen + local filmmaker Adam CK Vollick, 5th Anniversary Celebration with Ron Sexsmith and the Niagara Symphony, and eight performances for limited capacity audiences from Next Generation Leahy. Continued support for Brock University's academic programs offered at the PAC. Community consultations begin leading to the PAC's Strategic Recovery Plan; PAC applies for and receives support to proceed in an Equity Diversity and Inclusion Audit, working with BIPOC Executive Search.

2021 HIGHLIGHTS

Jan-July: Continued closures and staff layoffs due to COVID-19; hosted a national digital summit, *Exploring the Digital Needs of Niagara's Arts Community*, presented limited virtual performances and talks.

August: Return to work for PAC staff; second annual Emancipation Day weekend in collaboration with Matter of Black and Black Owned 905; planning and development of fall programming and reopening for PAC and partner/client events in a modified context.

September: 5th Celebration of Nations presented in hybrid form with limited in-person events as well as livestream offerings.

Oct-Nov-Dec: In-person programming resumes including film, concerts, and dance; virtual workshops and music events; hybrid 6-concert series Pairings debuts; outdoor site-specific world premiere of SKÉN:NEN by Kaha:wi Dance Theatre; Strategic Recovery Plan 2022-2024 released. PAC announced a 2022 Winter/Spring Season in Nov. Surge in COVID-19 numbers caused the declaration of a 2-month shutdown at the end of Dec 2021.



ARTIST: JULIAN TAYLOR, PAIRINGS SERIES
PHOTO: DAN BROWN

2021 STATISTICS

42 live shows
6,319 attendees

54 film presentations
1,226 attendees

\$213,086 in professional fees
paid to artists

62 online/virtual presentations

106,413 online/virtual attendees

17 rental clients

35 rental days

\$39,611 provided to community in
COVID rent relief and fee reduction

\$192,379 in funding received from federal,
provincial and regional bodies to support
programming and activities

\$16,500 received from federal,
provincial and regional bodies for
COVID relief and recovery



ARTIST: ROYAL WOOD | PHOTO: DAN BROWN



EVENT: CELEBRATION OF NATIONS
PHOTO: DAN BROWN

CELEBRATION OF NATIONS

Celebration of Nations (CofN) is an annual gathering of Indigenous Arts, Culture and Heritage and is curated by Artistic Director Michele-Elise Burnett (Métis) and Artistic Producer Tim Johnson (Mohawk), with support of the Celebration of Nations Advisory Committee and FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre staff.

Part of our year-round programming, Celebration of Nations reaches a crescendo on the weekend after Labour Day annually with a three-day gathering that showcases a wide variety of Indigenous arts, artists, and leaders ranging from traditional and contemporary music and dance, visual arts to film screenings, creative workshops, eye-opening teachings, and hands-on activities for both children and adults.

September 2020 marked the 4th edition of the gathering that was offered completely virtual with a global reach. The 5th edition in 2021 was offered in a hybrid model of both virtual and in-person.

2021 CofN Advisory Committee: Brian Kon, Gary Parker, Jennifer Dockstader, Phil Davis.

2021 COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- 50/50 Performing Arts Collective
- 101 Deweguns - A Living Hearts Legacy
- APTN
- Atlantic Presenters Association
- BlackOwned905
- Bravo Niagara! Festival of the Arts
- Brenda MacIntyre (Medicine Song Woman)
- Brock University
- Brock University Film Society
- Brock University - Human Rights and Equity
- Brock University - Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts
- CAPACOA - Canadian Association for the Performing Arts
- Carousel Players
- Chorus Niagara
- City of St. Catharines
- District School Board of Niagara
- The Gord Downie and Chanie Wenjack Fund
- Eastern Circle
- Essential Collective Theatre
- Folk Music Ontario
- Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre
- Frog Radio
- Gallery Players of Niagara
- Grandmother's Voice
- Hishuk'ish Tsawalk Drum & Dance Group
- Imperial Theatre (New Brunswick)
- Indigenous Diabetes Health Circle
- Indigenous Performing Arts Alliance
- Indigenous Tourism Ontario
- International Indigenous Music Summit
- Kakekalanicks Indigenous Arts Consultancy
- Kawayay7 | Ecko Aleck
- Landscape of Nations 360°
- Libro Credit Union
- Manitoba Arts Network
- Matter of Black
- Musée de Welland Museum
- Niagara Chapter Native Women Inc.
- Niagara College
- Niagara Falls Museums
- Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre
- Niagara Parks
- Niagara Region Anti-Racism Association
- Niagara Region Métis Council
- Niagara Region Women's Advisory Committee
- Niagara Regional Native Centre
- Niagara Symphony Orchestra
- One Dish, One Mic
- Ontario Presents
- Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils
- Pokuhulakon Witsehkehsu – Sisters of the Drum
- Positive Living Niagara
- Prairie Debut
- Pride Niagara
- Radio Western & Music is the Medicine
- Sky Magazine
- St. Catharines Downtown Association
- St. Catharines Library
- St. Catharines Museum
- Strong Water Women
- Tkaronto Music Festival
- Warrior Womyn of Positive Drum

FIRSTONTARIO PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE FULL TIME STAFF*

Colleen A. Smith, Chief Executive Officer
Jules Bartley, Executive Assistant and Secretary to the Board

Sara Palmieri, Director of Programming & Marketing
Jeff Hardy, Marketing & Communications Manager
Andrea Boitor, Business & Partnership Associate
Jordy Yack, Communications Coordinator
Annie Wilson, Programming Manager
Cathy Carr, Film Program Coordinator
Diana Moser, Programming Associate

Kathleen Ross, Director of Operations
Paul Buxton, Facilities Manager
Robert Nicholls, Production Manager
Russell Donohue, Production Supervisor
Dean Malton, Production Supervisor
Rosemarie Huber, Front of House Manager
Linda Hilko, Rental Contract Administrator
Jennie DiMarco, Events and Hospitality Coordinator
Jennifer Hunt, Events and Hospitality Coordinator

Carlos Robayo, Director of Finance and Administration
Kyle Giesbrecht, Finance and Accounting Supervisor
Leona McDonald, Finance and Administrative Associate
Chelsea Marcella, Finance and Administrative Associate
Christie Towne, HR / Payroll Associate



*The FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre
proudly works with IATSE Local 461.*

THANK YOU

FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre Board*

Mario De Divitiis (Chair); Peter W. Partridge Jr. (Vice Chair);
Christina Atkinson; Ken Chan; Shelley Chemnitz; Joseph Critelli;
Kristine Douglas; Councillor Carlos Garcia; Mary Jane Johnson;
Carol Merriam; David Oakes; Lloyd Smith; Mark Steinman;
Councillor Kevin Townsend

2020 + 2021 Public Funders and Supporters

We would like to acknowledge the City of St. Catharines Mayor,
City Council and staff; Brock University's President, faculty and staff;
the Department of Canadian Heritage; the Canada Council for the
Arts; Canada Summer Jobs; CAPACOA - Canadian Association for
the Performing Arts; the Province of Ontario; the Ontario Arts
Council; Ontario Presents; and the Niagara Region's Niagara
Investment in Culture Program.

Capital Donors

FirstOntario Credit Union; Peter and Janet Partridge; Joe and Anita
Robertson; Algoma Central Corporation; Cogeco; John and June
Mann; John and Harriet Lehnen; Joy Williams; RBC Foundation;
Marian Gordon-Kendall; The John Muratori Family; Ineke Brinkman;
Art and Val Fleming; Virginia Atkin and Keith Ambachtsheer;
Linda and Tom Goldspink; Wynne Nicholson; Christopher J. Slater
(in memory of Mr. and Mrs. J.L. Slater)

*Current as of June 2022

2020 + 2021 SPONSORS

Allstate; B4 Networks; Brock University;
CAA Niagara; Critelli's Furniture; District
School Board of Niagara; Freedom Mobile;
FirstOntario Credit Union; First Nations
Technical Institute; Gales Gas; Genesis Niagara;
MNP St. Catharines; Meridian Credit Union;
Niagara Catholic District School Board;
Niagara College; Niagara Conservatory of Music;
Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority;
The Pen Centre; Remax/Garden City Realty;
RE/MAX Hendriks Team Realty; Dr. Shimizu
Foundation; TD Financial; Thorold Auto
Parts & Recycling; Vineland Estates Winery;
Wind Group (East/Wind/Ma)

FIRSTONTARIO PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE VOLUNTEERS*

Rick Agnew
Edith Bacon
Gale Briggs
Victor Brodeur
Frances Bunting
Dennis Cheredar
Laurie Cheredar
Patt Chivers
Carol Clifford
Linda Cranford
Maureen Cripps
Anita Curran
Bonnie Dearborn
Judy Dennis
Wanda Derda

Sue Dryczewycz
Rita Eastman
Alec Edmondstone
Lyn Fox
Lynda Greer
Rene Grenville
Jane Hanna
Coby Koene
Zandy Kusyj
Alan Lau
Kathy Lyon
Cynthia Martin
John Meguerian
Sharon Meguerian
Carol Morningstar

Chereen Osborne
Vartkes Peltekoglu
Pearl Peritalo
Deborah Poppe
Melodie Robinson
Helen Self
Teresa Slobodian
Tina Summerskill
Tess Trojan
Diane Turner
Mark Turner
Annette Urlocker
Carol Valente
Cathy Van Oosten

*Current as of December 2021



EVENT: PAC GALA OPENING, NOV 2015
ARTIST: MARK LALAMA w/ CHORUS NIAGARA | PHOTO: BOB MAGEE

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

| | 2021 | 2020 |
|------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| ASSETS | | |
| Current | | |
| Assets: | | |
| Cash | \$ 1,499,542 | \$ 619,154 |
| Accounts receivable | 40,814 | 103,601 |
| HST receivable | 8,060 | 23,756 |
| Due from the City of St. Catharines | 22,147 | 26,282 |
| Prepaid expenses | 149,634 | 77,895 |
| Inventories | 11,429 | 10,927 |
| | 1,731,626 | 861,615 |
| | | |
| LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS | | |
| Current liabilities: | | |
| Accounts payable and accrued liabilities | 483,227 | 348,395 |
| Deferred revenue | 417,888 | 183,120 |
| Advance ticket sales and donations | 299,450 | 17,942 |
| Deferred grant revenue | 132,421 | 96,858 |
| | 1,332,986 | 646,315 |
| Post-employment benefits | 29,700 | 22,000 |
| | 1,362,686 | 668,315 |
| | | |
| NET ASSETS | | |
| Unrestricted | | |
| Internally restricted: | | |
| Sustainability reserve | 275,320 | 72,246 |
| Encumbrance reserve | 93,620 | 121,054 |
| | 368,940 | 193,300 |
| | 1,731,626 | 861,615 |

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

| | 2021 | 2020 |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Revenue: | | |
| Earned revenue | \$ 455,324 | \$ 748,942 |
| Government grants | 208,879 | 272,860 |
| Municipal investment | 1,585,334 | 1,592,857 |
| Fund development | 71,267 | 80,942 |
| Contributions and other | 838,183 | 832,709 |
| Cultural Capital Investment Fund revenues | 44,089 | — |
| | 3,203,076 | 3,528,310 |
| Expenses: | | |
| Administration | 1,031,541 | 917,056 |
| Building operations | 430,548 | 401,542 |
| Finance and other | 98,695 | 108,231 |
| Fund development | 2,848 | 21,884 |
| Marketing and box office | 226,338 | 237,582 |
| Office | 86,291 | 89,843 |
| Programming, production and rentals | 1,107,086 | 1,558,872 |
| Cultural Capital Investment Fund expense | 44,089 | — |
| | 3,027,436 | 3,335,010 |
| Excess of revenues over expenses | 175,640 | 193,300 |

Note – At year end the excess revenues over expenses balance is transferred to both the sustainability and encumbrance reserves.

The FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre's audited financial statements are conducted by KPMG and are available upon request.



FirstOntario
PERFORMING ARTS
CENTRE

250 St. Paul Street, St. Catharines, Ontario, L2R 3M2
FIRSTONTARIOPAC.CA