

In a 2012 study of the access and availability of the arts in Canada, 92% of Canadians surveyed believe that arts experiences are a valuable way to bring together people from different languages and cultural traditions.

(Source: [Canadian Arts Presenting Association](#))

### Performing Arts

Live performances contributed \$2.5 billion to Canada's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2014, and were responsible for 55,000 jobs. In 2016, theatre groups in Southwestern Alberta communities staged over 200 performances, attracting almost 20,000 people. While local performing arts continue to be a driving force for tourism in the region, they are also responsible for the cultivation of an important resource: culture. When considering relocation, 65% of businesses or skilled workers find the presence of a thriving arts and cultural scene to be important. 4 in 5 Canadians in general believe that live performance spaces in our communities have a positive impact on quality of life.

(Source: [Canadian Arts Presenting Association](#))

**Did you know?** In an effort to grow and support Canadian art, not-for-profit arts organizations are eligible to apply for matching funding from the Canada Cultural Investment Fund, when private contributions are made to endowment funds. Both New West Theatre and the Lethbridge Symphony have permanent endowment funds with the Community Foundation.

#### **Empress Theatre of Fort Macleod**

The Empress Theatre opened for business in 1912 and has remained in operation ever since. The building is currently designated an Alberta Historical Resource. The Theatre staged 40 performances in 2016, to approximately 5,000 people. The theatre is also a first-run cinema, showing mainstream feature films.

(Source: [Empress Theatre Society](#))

#### **Carriage House Theatre of Cardston**

The Carriage House Theatre was built in 1912. Currently operated by the Carriage House Theatre Foundation, the theatre shows feature films and houses live theatre productions. In 2016, 64 performances attracted 12,820 people.

(Source: [Carriage House Theatre Foundation](#))

#### **Claresholm Society for the Arts**

The Claresholm Society for the Arts was formed in 2013 to create awareness, increase participation, build relationships and facilitate opportunities for those interested in performing arts in Claresholm and the surrounding area. Operating out of the Claresholm Community Hall, the group put on 9 performances for approximately 900 people in 2016.

(Source: Claresholm Society for the Arts)

#### **New West Theatre**

Founded in 1990, New West Theatre stages dozens of theatrical productions throughout the year. Well-known for its musical and comedy revues, it also presents plays, musicals, children's theatre, and original dramas. Made up primarily of a company of local actors, singers and technicians, New West also provides summer theatre camps for youth. In 2016, New West Theatre staged 98 performances and 14

presentations for schools.

(Source: Derek Stevenson, New West Theatre)

### **Lethbridge Symphony**

The Lethbridge Symphony's 2016-17 season was its 56th since its founding in 1960. Symphony Series performances included film soundtracks, show tunes, and symphonic pieces both old and new. This season, the Symphony put on 31 performances, attracting a total attendance of 11,216. Six of its performances were geared toward schools, and 4 of those were part of the Feel the Beat program. The Feel the Beat program began as an initiative of the University of Lethbridge's Conservatory of Music, and, in 2017, continued through the Symphony. The program introduces symphonic music to children, teaching them about different instruments, musical composition, and famous composers.

(Source: [Lethbridge Symphony Organization](#))

### **University of Lethbridge Faculty of Fine Arts**

The U of L's Faculty of Fine Arts conferred 111 undergraduate degrees in 9 programs in 2016-17. Program subjects include, art, drama, new media, music, and Native American Art. The faculty had 1,314 undergraduate students in the 2016-17 school year.

(Source: [U of L Fact Book, 2016/2017](#))

Two theatres serve the dramatic arts program for the faculty: the 450-seat proscenium-style University Theatre, and the David Spinks Theatre, a black box theatre that can be reconfigured to suit each performance. Since 1977, there have been 157 mainstage productions. In 2002, the student-run theatre company TheatreXtra began operations, and have since put on 58 plays and theatrical events.

(Source: [Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Lethbridge](#))

## **Allied Arts**

Allied Arts groups in Lethbridge, Pincher Creek, and the Crowsnest Pass work to foster creativity and promote the arts in many forms throughout Southwestern Alberta.

### **Allied Arts Council of Lethbridge**

The Allied Arts Council of Lethbridge was first established in 1958 and works to encourage, coordinate, and promote the arts in the area.

- 213 artists, art groups, and non-artist supporting members held memberships in 2016
- 750 students attended art workshops in 2016
- 322 Housing First clients took part in classes in 2016

(Source: [Allied Arts Council of Lethbridge](#))

### **Allied Arts Council of Pincher Creek**

The Allied Arts Council of Pincher Creek works to cultivate creativity and better engage and support regional communities to build capacity for innovation.

- 64 artists and art groups held memberships in 2016
- 194 people participated in arts classes in 2016
- Operates The Lebel Mansion, a community and cultural centre in Pincher Creek

(Source: [Yvan Lebel, Allied Arts Council of Pincher Creek](#))

### **Crowsnest Pass Allied Arts Association**

Founded in 1986, the Crowsnest Pass Allied Arts Association empowers local art through increased exposure of local artists and enhances community connections to art resources. The association operates the Crowsnest Pass Public Art Gallery, a facility that receives over 7,000 visitors per year to its rotating exhibits. In 2017, these exhibits included “Bridges,” a show commemorating the 85th anniversary of the Alberta Society of Artists, and “Interpreting Canada: An Artist’s Portrait,” featuring works of art about what it means to be Canadian.

(Source: [Crowsnest Pass Allied Art Gallery](#))

## Heritage and Culture

### **Indigenous Culture**

The Blackfoot Canadian Cultural Society’s mission is to be a source of identity, pride, and inspiration for Indigenous people and all others, as well as to be a source for accurate information on the Blackfoot people. Activities include an annual International Peace Pow Wow, the Blackfoot Arts and Heritage Festival, and National Aboriginal Awareness Week

Held in Waterton Lakes National Park in August, the Blackfoot Arts and Heritage Festival features tepee raisings, art displays, and a Pow Wow. Approximately 1,000 people attended the festival in 2016.

(Sources: Blackfoot Canadian Cultural Society and [mywaterton.ca](#))

National Aboriginal Awareness Week 2017 ran from June 19 to June 24. Events across Southwestern Alberta included activities at the Galt Museum and Fort Whoop-Up, a Blackfoot Drums and Dance performance at Waterton Lakes National Park, and the “Moon of the Longest Day” celebration at Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump.

(Sources: [Galt Museum & Archives](#) and [Government of Alberta, Culture and Tourism](#))

**Did you know?** The Blackfoot word “Niitsitapi” means “the original people,” and is another name for members of the Blackfoot Confederacy.

(Source: [native-languages.org](#))

### **Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden**

Nikka Yuko was built 50 years ago in recognition of contributions made by citizens of Japanese ancestry to the multicultural community of Lethbridge, and as a symbol of international friendship.

- 31,487 visitors in 2016
- 10,412 people visited the Winter Lights Festival in 2016

(Source: Michelle Day, Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden)

### **How the Community Foundation Helps**

The Community Foundation gave grants to Crowsnest Historical Society, Devil’s Coulee Cooperating Society, and Gem of the West Museum for use in preparing new exhibits, purchasing staging equipment for exhibits, and to use for museum renovations. Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden also received a grant in 2016 for the Winter Lights Festival.