



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### **The Dance Centre: Supporting Dance in British Columbia**

For nearly four decades, The Dance Centre has been a driving force behind British Columbia's vibrant dance scene. Established in 1986 as the province's key resource for dance, the organization has grown into one of Canada's most dynamic hubs for creation, performance, training, and community engagement.

Today, The Dance Centre presents a year-round lineup of public performances and events; invests deeply in artists working across all genres; offers a wide array of community programs; and operates one of the country's leading dance facilities in the heart of downtown Vancouver - all while championing the profile of BC dance at home and beyond. The range of its activities is unparalleled in Canadian dance.

Executive Director Mirna Zagar said: "Over nearly forty years, The Dance Centre has built up a comprehensive range of programs and activities which support hundreds of artists, offer a diverse selection of performances and events, and welcome audiences to our vibrant building, with an ever-expanding array of shows and creative opportunities every season. We are committed to sustaining a strong and vibrant community through dance, and asserting the impact of dance on society's wellbeing."

## **ARTIST PROGRAMS**

At the heart of The Dance Centre's mission is a deep commitment to fostering choreographic creation and sustaining professional careers in dance. Hundreds of companies and individual artists access residencies, labs, subsidized studio space, and other resources every year.

### **Programs:**

- Artist-in-Residence, DanceLabs and special projects: programs provide space and resources for research, creation, performance, and community engagement.
- 12 Minutes Max: a long-running incubator for emerging artists, offering studio time, feedback, and dialogue in support of new short works.
- Dance In Vancouver: a biennial platform that showcases the innovative contemporary dance of the West Coast to national and international presenters, sparking touring and collaboration opportunities.

- Artistic Exchanges: partnerships with local, national, and international organizations help to broaden artistic dialogue and mobility.

#### **Awards:**

- Isadora Award (annual): recognizes artistic achievement.
- Lola Award (biennial): awards \$10,000 to a mid-career/senior artist.
- Iris Garland Emerging Choreographer Award (biennial): contributes \$5000 to a presentation by a promising young choreographer.

#### **A Professional Resource:**

- Dance Centre membership connects dance professionals - including choreographers, performers, teachers, and companies - to opportunities for subsidized studio rentals, programs and awards, grant and career guidance, information and consultations, industry opportunities, and workshops with visiting and local artists.

### **PUBLIC PERFORMANCES AND EVENTS**

The Dance Centre presents on average 25 performances every season through two curated performance series, partnerships, and special events, drawing diverse audiences and raising the visibility of dance in the city.

- Global Dance Connections: signature performance series features work by local, Canadian and international artists.
- Discover Dance!: popular and accessible noon hour series explores different dance styles, combining performance with artist talkbacks.
- Partnerships: collaborations with organizations including the PuSh International Performing Arts Festival, Matriarchs Uprising Festival, Dancing on the Edge, and more contribute to program development and audience outreach.

### **COMMUNITY PROGRAMS**

The Dance Centre's community programs create accessible entry points for people of all ages and backgrounds to experience dance, connecting and strengthening different communities.

- Open House: annual day of free classes and events every September.
- International Dance Day: public events every April 29 celebrating the art of dance.
- The Power of Dance program: workshops for elementary and high school students, immigrant and refugee youth, and seniors.
- Free studio showings throughout the year offer audiences a glimpse into the creative process.

## A HOME FOR DANCE

The Dance Centre led the vision to build a dedicated home for BC's diverse dance community, realized in 2001 with the opening of its purpose-built facility in downtown Vancouver. Designed by Architectura with the acclaimed Canadian architect Arthur Erickson, it was a groundbreaking milestone in North American dance infrastructure.

The building has become a vibrant cultural hub for dance activity, housing rehearsals, classes, workshops, performances and events. Known until 2026 as Scotiabank Dance Centre in recognition of its original title sponsor, and now known simply as The Dance Centre, the building has welcomed and inspired over one million artists and visitors since its inception. It has inspired similar developments across Canada and is internationally acknowledged.

- The 32,000 sq ft facility houses six dance studios, a studio theatre/production space, boardroom, lounge, offices, rooftop patio, and other amenities.
- A typical season sees an estimated 87,000+ visits, 2,000 rehearsals, 800 classes and workshops, and 120 performances.
- Every genre of dance – from ballet and Bharata Natyam to salsa and tap - takes place in the building, as well as other art forms including theatre and music.

## PROMOTING BC DANCE

As the province's primary hub for dance information, The Dance Centre connects the public with performances, classes, companies, and resources through its website, [thedancecentre.ca](http://thedancecentre.ca). Its international initiatives, including Dance In Vancouver and a range of exchanges and partnerships, have been pivotal to the increasing presence of BC dance across Canada and around the world.

## RECOGNITION

The Dance Centre's impact and leadership have been widely acknowledged, including:

- Downtown Vancouver Association Achievement Award (2000)
- Spirit of Vancouver Award for outstanding spirit and commitment to the community and the arts (2002)
- Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association Appreciation Award for its outstanding contribution to downtown Vancouver (2012)
- Nominated in the Arts & Culture category of the Vancouver Courier Stars of Vancouver (2019).
- The Georgia Straight's Best of Vancouver Awards –Best Dance Studio runner-up (2025).

**Information:** 604.606.6400 [thedancecentre.ca](http://thedancecentre.ca)

**Social Media:**

Facebook @thedancecentre

Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, Threads @thedancecentrebcc

The Dance Centre is situated on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the xwməθkwəy'əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səl'ílwəta?/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

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The operations of The Dance Centre are supported by the Government of Canada, Canada Council for the Arts, the Province of British Columbia, the BC Arts Council, and the City of Vancouver through the Office of Cultural Affairs.

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