



The Dance Centre

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Dance Centre: A Home for Dance

The Dance Centre's home for dance opened in 2001 in the heart of downtown Vancouver, a stunning \$11 million state-of-the-art project designed by Architectura in collaboration with the renowned Canadian architect Arthur Erickson, and a major development in the history of dance in Canada. It is the only purpose-built facility in BC dedicated to promoting the full spectrum of dance as a performing art: a vibrant cultural hub which provides a diverse dance community with a home of its own.

The Dance Centre's building is a vibrant cultural hub for dance activity, housing rehearsals, classes, workshops, performances and events. Every genre of dance – from ballet and Bharata Natyam to salsa and tap - takes place there, as well as other art forms including theatre and music. It is a gathering space where professional artists and people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds experience the power of dance. It has inspired similar developments across Canada and is internationally acknowledged.

HISTORY

The Dance Centre was established in 1986 as the province's key resource for dance, and a central part of its mission was to provide a creation centre for Vancouver's dance community. After securing Federal and Provincial government funds, The Dance Centre created The Dance Foundation in 1995 as an independent not-for-profit society to fundraise for, construct, and own the building.

Construction began in April 2000. On August 17, 2001, Governor General Adrienne Clarkson unveiled a plaque dedicating the building to the dance artists of Canada. On September 6, 2001 the building was officially opened to the public.

The building was initially named after Scotiabank, the leaseholder of the land. In March 2026 the Dance Foundation purchased the lease for \$6 million, with major support from the Government of Canada's Canada Cultural Spaces Fund, the City of Vancouver, and the Province of British Columbia, alongside contributions from foundations and individual donors.

With the future of the facility secured, it is now known simply as The Dance Centre, reclaiming the name envisioned more than forty years before when the organization first set out to create a dedicated home for dance in British Columbia.

Today, The Dance Centre is a hub for dance activity.

- A typical year sees an estimated 87,000+ visits, 550 studio renters, 2000 rehearsals, 800 classes and workshops, 120 performances and other events, and 400 meetings.
- Its high-quality spaces are used by professional artists, recreational dance enthusiasts, and the wider community.
- Since its inception the facility has attracted well over 1 million artists, patrons and visitors, and provided artists with access to free studio space valued at over \$2 million.

STUDIOS

The 32,000 sq ft, seven storey, glass-enclosed building houses six spacious studios, all flooded with natural light and featuring sprung floors, mirrors and air conditioning; a fully-equipped black-box theatre; and other amenities.

- The **Mirna Zagar Studio** measures 21 x 30 ft. The studio was dedicated to The Dance Centre's long-serving Executive Director by a generous donor in 2015.
- The **Judith R Marcuse Studio**, named after one of Vancouver's most eminent dance creators, is 25 x 32 ft. It is located on the top floor and opens out onto a rooftop patio.
- The **Stephen A Jarislowsky Studio** (named after the financier and philanthropist) and the **Sharon Jandali Studio** (dedicated to the memory of the late wife of Tarek Jandali, President of Seaside Paper Products), 35 x 40 ft each.
- The **Bruce R Birmingham Studio** (dedicated to Scotiabank's then-President) and the **Earl Kraul & Grant Strate Studio** (named in memory of the late Earl Kraul and Grant Strate, founding members of the National Ballet of Canada): 39 x 47 ft each.
- The **Faris Family Studio** is a versatile 46 x 64 ft fully equipped studio theatre with retractable seating for 154. The Faris family has been a strong supporter of the arts, and the facility, for many years.

The building also has a boardroom, changing rooms with showers, a dancers' lounge with kitchenette, and a physiotherapy clinic. Its administrative offices house 12 arts organizations including The Dance Centre, and Vancouver Ballet Society with its library and archives.

The Dance Centre provides a safe, well-equipped and affordable working environment for artists to create and perform. It has also brought greater visibility and profile to the artform in the city, and fuelled artistic creativity, partnerships and community-building.

Mirna Zagar, Executive Director of The Dance Centre says: “Our building has brought the dance community closer together, enhancing collaboration between artists and contributing to building bridges between cultures and disciplines. The diversity of dance forms that are being supported and nurtured here reflects our society of today. It is truly a place where people can connect through the art of dance.”

Information: 604.606.6400 thedancecentre.ca

Social Media:

Facebook @thedancecentre

Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, Threads @thedancecentrebc

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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