

**Ruth O'Doherty. Former BC Marketing Manager, Worldwide Music Ventures,  
Calgary AB & Nashville TN**

I have worked in the performing arts for many years in various behind the scenes roles, everything from stagehand to producer. Over the years I have been involved with: Footlight Theatre in Burnaby; Royal City Musical Theatre in New Westminster; Theatre Under the Stars in Vancouver; the Roots and Blues Festival in Calgary; and different production companies bringing live artists to Western Canada. We have promoted tours for Van Morrison, KD Lang, Buddy Guy, Mavis Staples, Tony Bennet, Lyle Lovett, Jason Isbell, Bob Dylan and many more.

Since moving back to Kelowna I have worked remotely promoting tours. And as a volunteer, I am the Artistic Director for the Lantern Folk Roots Music Society. I have had experience with many different venues both large and small.

Through this past year of Covid we have seen the importance of the performing arts on our mental health. Even before this, the meaning of what a community theatre is, has been changing. The Arts help people reach their full potential at all stages of life.

Kelowna should be leading the way. I was growing up in Kelowna when the current Community Theatre was opened in 1962 and the population is nearly ten times now what it was then. Since Theatre drives economic growth, urban renewal, and fosters technological innovation it would seem a given that we keep up with the times. Technological innovation is also having an effect on theatre design as well as on stage and behind the scenes. Kelowna needs a new facility.

Penticton has already purchased the land for a new performing arts centre. Kamloops has plans for a new centre with a 1200 seat theatre and a 450-seat theatre with rehearsal space. (The referendum was postponed because of COVID). Vernon's Performing Arts Centre was built in 2001. We will need Capital spending to spur economic growth in the post COVID world. The time is right.