

VICTORIA SYMPHONY 2021/2022

STRATEGIC PLAN



CHRISTIAN KLUXEN MUSIC DIRECTOR



VICTORIA SYMPHONY SOCIETY STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2024

The Victoria Symphony Society's strategic plan for 2021-2024 has been developed under extraordinary circumstances. The arrival in 2020 of a new CEO, Matthew White, corresponded with the end of our previous five-year plan and created a unique opportunity to consider how best to chart the next three years, with new leadership at the helm.

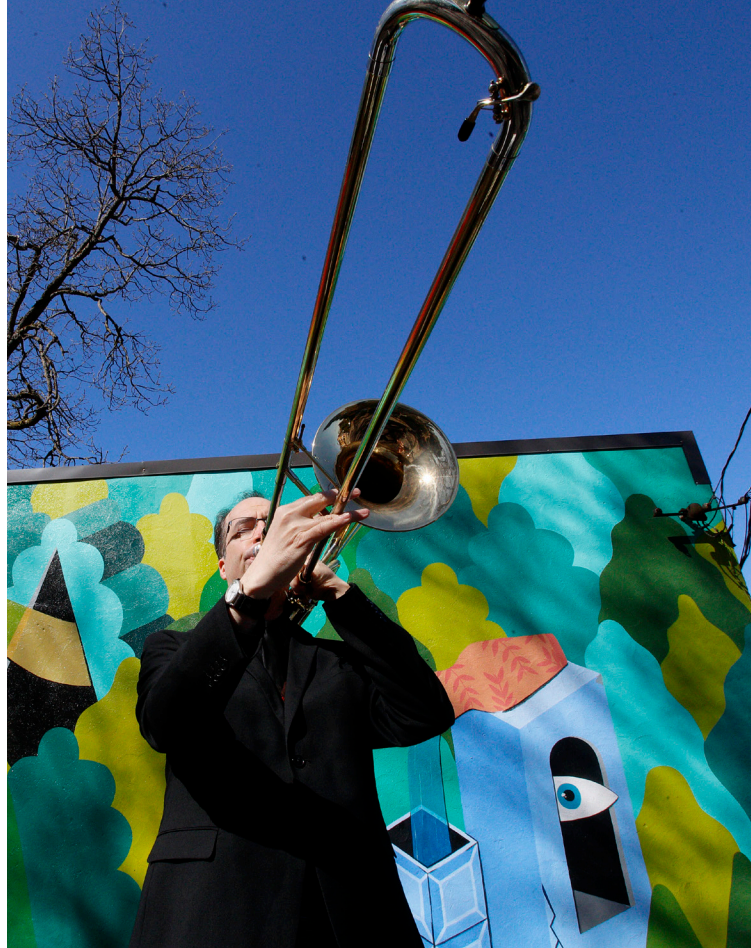
This change in leadership also took place during one of the most disruptive and challenging times in the history of the performing arts in Canada. The COVID-19 pandemic closed the doors of arts venues across the country, depriving our audiences of live music and threatening our financial stability. At the same time, it served as a strong reminder that the arts have unique power to provide comfort in a time of crisis and motivated us to re-imagine ways to share music with our audiences. Moreover, it reinforced our belief in the importance of defining a common direction and in articulating our guiding principles and our shared goals as we seek ways to continue to bring the transformational power of music to our community.

The result is the creation of this three-year plan, elaborated over the last six months, with the helpful input of a range of stakeholders, who provided suggestions on how to re-imagine our mission, vision and goals, during the current challenging times and beyond. Our donors, funders, audiences, artistic collaborators and venue partners all provided comments, along with the Symphony musicians, staff and Board and Foundation members.

BUILDING ON OUR SUCCESSES

The current strategic plan builds on many of the successes of the Symphony's 2015-2020 strategic plan. During that time, the orchestra continued to develop artistically under the baton of our Music Director Christian Kluxen, demonstrating its remarkable versatility and ability to create world class music. We also built our Foundation well beyond the stated goal of \$12 million and eliminated our structural deficit.

Our strategic direction for the next three years will continue to focus on artistic excellence and financial stability. Certainly, the pandemic has reinforced our view that our ongoing health and success as an organization require financial resilience. And financial stability will be essential as we continue to pursue our key goal of artistic excellence, exploring opportunities for still more creative programming and risk-taking. We will draw on some of the lessons from the pandemic, that forced us to find new and innovative approaches, and we intend to create art that both stimulates our musicians and captivates our audience. We plan to do so in a way that further reflects and engages our diverse community and expands and deepens our relationships. We have been overwhelmed by the support of our community during the pandemic and appreciate how integral its members are to our success.



CHALLENGES AHEAD

There is no doubt that pursuing our plan will be challenging, given the ongoing uncertainty due to the ongoing pandemic. But we are convinced that defining our new strategic direction together will help us move forward with purpose. Our shared vision and goals will be reflected each year in the work that we undertake to innovate and develop artistically as well as in our efforts to increase the size and diversity of our audience and to engage more broadly and effectively with our community.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Victoria Symphony performs on the traditional lands of the Lekwungen peoples and acknowledges with respect the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continues to this day. We extend our appreciation for the opportunity to live, create, and perform on this territory.



MISSION

The Victoria Symphony is a highly versatile Canadian orchestra that inspires, educates, and captivates our community through the transformational power of music.

3-YEAR VISION

The Victoria Symphony's 3-year Vision is to enrich our programming with music that inspires our audience and motivates our musicians. We will cultivate and connect with our community through dynamic performances of new and traditional repertoire, innovative concert formats, stimulating artistic partnerships, and digital strategies.

The Victoria Symphony will transform how we engage with our community through education and outreach programs that help us attract a larger and more diverse audience. And we will build on the strong support of our community to maintain the financial strength and inspirational organizational culture necessary to realize our aspirations.

VICTORIA SYMPHONY SOCIETY STRATEGIC PILLARS

1. Artistic development and programming
2. Audience growth and diversity
3. Community engagement
4. Organization, culture, and environment
5. Financial stability

These five strategic pillars form the foundation for the development of the symphony's 3-year goals.

PILLAR 1: Artistic development and programming

A commitment to the highest possible artistic standards and creative programming are at the heart of what we value as an organization. We do not only exist to sell tickets. We need to create art that challenges our musicians and captures our audience's imagination.

- 1.1 – Formalize artistic priorities that stimulate orchestra members and captivate our audience.
- 1.2 – Nurture professional artistic partnerships, exchanges, and cross disciplinary collaborations that add value to the music.
- 1.3 – Enhance the audience's experience through innovative programming and concert formats.
- 1.4 – Build the Symphony in the Summer Festival and Splash format into a more diverse range of events and local partnerships.



PILLAR 2: Audience growth and diversity

The decline in attendance at symphony events in recent years despite a growth in population demonstrates that we must pay close attention to the evolving habits and expectations of contemporary audiences. Finding new ways to reflect, engage with, and captivate a changing population will be key to our ongoing relevance and viability.

- 2.1 – Increase the number of people experiencing our performances and engaging in our activities.
- 2.2 – Increase the diversity (age, gender, geography, ethnicity, income, education) of people experiencing our performances and engaging in our activities.
- 2.3 – Build a board, staff, and volunteer base whose composition reflects the diversity of the community we serve.

PILLAR 3: Community Engagement

The most successful symphony orchestras are those that have found ways to create strong connections with their communities. Expanding our role in civic life and awareness will require finding out what our community values and finding new ways to engage in dialogue that leads to reciprocal learning.

- 3.1 – Expand our education and community relations programs to enhance engagement and increase accessibility.
- 3.2 – Nurture existing relationships and identify opportunities for new partnerships.





PILLAR 4: **Organization, culture, and environment**

Building common purpose and respect through every layer of the Victoria Symphony is essential for achieving our artistic goals. Better management and work culture help create better art.

- 4.1 – Establish clear timelines and deliverables for the preparation of annual business plans and associated operating budgets.
- 4.2 – Create and nurture common purpose and the highest professional standards throughout the organization, especially among musicians and staff.
- 4.3 – Equip and support musicians, staff, VSS board, Foundation board and volunteers to have transparent and respectful dialogue with each other.
- 4.4 – Enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the organization

PILLAR 5: **Financial Sustainability**

Artistic excellence and risk-taking in programming require enough money and financial stability to allow for investments that pay off over time.

- 5.1 – Increase the Foundation Assets while ensuring sufficient operational and program funding.
- 5.2 – Design clearly delineated and integrated development campaigns (Foundation, Special Projects, and Operating).
- 5.3 – Increase and diversify revenue streams (earned income, donations, and government funding)



620 View St., Suite 610
Victoria, BC V8W 1J6
www.victoriasymphony.ca
250.385.6515

