

Calgary Foundation spring 2019

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Power to the People

Building a more inclusive
future for everyone

Where the Wild Things Are

Creating harmony with
nature in the Bow Valley

Life Cycle

Business success lets
brothers give back to
community

Superheroes

LeeAnne Ireland: Taking
action for Indigenous youth



Calgary Philharmonic
Orchestra bassist Matthew
Heller participates in the
Concerts in Care program.

Creative Innovation

Taking music and theatre to new places

By Jennifer Priesen • Photography by Erin Brooke Burns

From the dreamy sounds of a violin to a fairytale vision coming to life on stage, Calgarians are carried away to new places through art. With support from Calgary Foundation, these two organizations are working to make sure that creativity continues to flourish in the city.

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1 Concerts in Care

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As a professional violinist who played with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra for a decade, Laura Reid is used to an audience. But when she performs with the Health Arts Society of Alberta's (HASA) Concerts in Care program, she says, the intimate setting adds extra impact.

Carrying her violin into a care home to play a concert for seniors feels like "walking into someone's living room," Reid says.

"I always come away from those concerts feeling like there's meaning in what we do. We can take things for granted as able-bodied people who live independently, but music is about quality of life and we all deserve that."

The Concerts in Care program has brought thousands of performances to care homes across Canada since launching in 2006. The program only arrived in Calgary last year, but the impact is already clear to Meran Currie-Roberts, executive and artistic director of HASA.

"We have more than 30 musicians on the roster in Calgary, and it's growing every day," she says. "And the artists love it. They tell me that they are often in tears when the elders start singing

along to the pieces that move them, and they thank me for opening their eyes to a whole other community that they didn't know before."

“I always come away from those concerts feeling like there's meaning in what we do.” —Laura Reid



Bassoonist Michael Hope, left, has been performing with the Concerts in Care program since its Calgary launch.

High-quality, professional music

Ensembles play different styles of music including classical, opera and jazz for each of the hour-long performances. Based on the premise of bringing high-quality, professional music to elders in care, all of the musicians are paid union scale and pension for their work.

The concerts are subsidized to keep costs low for the care homes. Currie-Roberts says that's an important factor because the average entertainment budget for these facilities is just \$75 to \$100 per month.

"And that's for everyone, not just one client," she adds.

Michael Hope has been performing as a bassoonist and vocalist with HASA since the program launched in Calgary, and recalls many conversations with seniors who tell him how much they miss seeing music performed live. When he sees their smiling faces in the audience, he's thankful to share the gift of music with such a grateful group.

"I really think that listening to live music is a birthright for everybody," he says. "It's sad when people are not able to experience that, so going into places like this is a joy."

This year, HASA will perform more than 350 concerts for elders in care across Alberta, and Currie-Roberts says she hopes to expand the program to more communities. ■





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—Michael Hope



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Alberta Ballet's Set Assembly Kits

As audiences watched dancers glide across the stage in Alberta Ballet's rendition of *The Sleeping Beauty* last fall, they had no idea of the complexity of the set behind the pirouettes.

After years of constructing elaborate sets complete with mammoth castle towers and staircases, the

company collected enough set pieces to fill its warehouse in the city's southeast. A solution was needed, so the team created something new: a set assembly kit.

Using modular pieces, the kit is a skeletal system that can be reconfigured in multiple ways and then flat-packed to save on storage. Chris George, president and CEO of Alberta Ballet, describes