
CITY OF KELOWNA

MEMORANDUM

Date: January 12, 2001
File No.: 1853-20

To: City Manager

From: Cultural Services Manager

Subject: Festival Fund Grants

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council approve a Festival Fund Grant of \$29,000.00, with funding allocated from the existing 2001 budget to The Sunshine Theatre Society for The 1st Annual International Kelowna Comedy Festival.

BACKGROUND:

The Arts and Cultural Advisory Committee accepts applications for funding from the Festival and Special Events Initiative. The Arts and Cultural Advisory Committee, a Council Committee of arts and tourism professionals, administers these funds. Non-profit organizations in Kelowna are eligible to apply for funding to create a new Festival or Event that would support and enhance the City's cultural tourism initiative. Existing events and those receiving other civic grants are not eligible.

City Council approved \$100,000 for 2001 to stimulate and initiate Arts Festivals and Special Events that will deliver a dynamic and professional product to the citizens of Kelowna.

Sunshine Theatre Society has applied to the Festival Fund to assist in creating The 1st Annual International Kelowna Comedy Festival. This high profile event is scheduled to open on Thursday August 2nd and run through to Sunday August 5th, 2001.

The four-day Festival will include events at the Community Theatre, the Laurel Centre, Island Stage in Waterfront Park, and at designated outdoor locations. Some events will be affordably ticketed indoors, while many others will be free, family events happening on the plazas and walkways throughout the Cultural District. A strong component will be street theatre with jugglers, comedians and clowns from all over the world entertaining the crowds.

Although the ACAC encourages events to happen outside of the high season, there are several reasons for this timing:

- 1) The Kelowna Comedy Festival's programming will be assisted by the Vancouver International Comedy Festival, and will complete a circle that includes the Kamloops

Comedy Festival and the Nelson Street Buskers Festival. The economies of contracting artists who are already in British Columbia from all over the world, and the availability of a tremendous variety of talent makes the timing of this event appropriate.

- 2) As a primarily outdoor event there is a significant need to try to guarantee good weather. There will also be an opportunity to partner with Parks Alive! during their active season.
- 3) The ACAC sees this Festival as a “value-added” event perfect for not only the citizens of Kelowna, but also for the many visitors who will be in town that weekend. There is not a great deal planned at that time and the Comedy Festival will be a perfect sell to all the local hotels, restaurants and visitors to the downtown core.

In subsequent years, as our tourism demographic shifts and perhaps compromises some of our appeal, we will have dynamic, well-produced events, like the Comedy Festival to continue to encourage people to come to Kelowna. We will be well-positioned to handle the changing tastes of tourists, and as the Comedy Festival grows and its reputation increases, the event's quality and that of Kelowna's other primary tourism products, will draw from all over Western Canada and the United States.

Ian Forsyth,
Cultural Services Manager

IF/cm

cc: Director of Parks and Leisure Services