
CITY OF KELOWNA

MEMORANDUM

Date: June 3, 2002
File No.: 1853-20

To: City Manager

From: Acting Cultural Services Manager

Subject: Festivals Fund Grant

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council authorize \$25,000.00 from the Festivals Fund to the Sunshine Theatre Society for the 2nd Annual Kelowna Comedy Festival.

BACKGROUND:

The Arts and Cultural Advisory Committee (ACAC) is delegated administrative responsibility for the Festivals Fund. Non-profit arts organizations in Kelowna are eligible to apply for funding to create or expand an arts based festival in support of the City's cultural tourism initiative.

The Inaugural Kelowna Comedy Festival took place in the summer of 2001 over 4 days and nights with ~ 6,000 in attendance. The support of the Festivals Fund was fundamental to the its overall success. Community support was substantial with \$16,000 in-kind donations from the media and over \$7,000 from the business community. There were 57 volunteers and 323 volunteer hours. The ticketed events drew a more diverse demographic to the theatres, and the free outdoor events brought people downtown and into the Cultural District. 77% of the audience were from Kelowna and the Okanagan Valley with 23% from other areas, mostly the BC coast or Alberta.

DISCUSSION:

The Sunshine Theatre Society has applied to the Festivals Fund to assist in the 2nd Annual Kelowna Comedy Festival. The application does meet the criteria established in City policy. The ACAC discussed this application at their meeting of May 9, 2002, and passed a resolution in support of this recommendation.

This high profile event is scheduled from Thursday, August 1st to Monday August 5th, 2002. The Comedy Festival will take place throughout the Cultural District including ticketed events at the Kelowna Community Theatre, the Performance Centre, and the Laurel Building. There are many 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.

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In conjunction with the Comedy Festival, Sunshine Theatre Society is also expanding their program to include:

- 1) Amateur Comedy Video Screening: 'Short Shorts' - this program invites youth from the Okanagan to enter short videos for the "Funniest Amateur Video Award".
- 2) The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged) – this successful play ran at the Kelowna Community Theatre in April 2002. The return of this hilarious play will begin on July 26th and run through to August 6th as a lead up to the Comedy Festival.

The Kelowna Comedy Festival has proven to be a dynamic, well-produced event, with wide appeal. It encourages people to come right into the heart of the Cultural District. As the Comedy Festival programs and reputation grows, this event has the potential to attract tourists from all over western Canada and the northwestern United States.

J.W. Reid Oddleifson,
Acting Cultural Services Manager

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cc: Director of Parks and Leisure Services