

# HIGH PERFORMANCE RODEO 2026

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# REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

# Celebrating 40 Years

## A CULTURAL CORNERSTONE OF CALGARY

For four decades, the High Performance Rodeo has been a vital part of Calgary's cultural landscape. This annual festival highlights groundbreaking performances across various disciplines, uniting local and international talents to craft extraordinary artistic experiences that captivate and inspire our community.

## JOIN THE FUN AND EXPERIENCE THE JOY

Each January for three weeks, a diverse array of performers from near and far gather in Calgary to create unforgettable moments. Our festival is dedicated to entertaining a wide range of audiences while offering a platform for innovative and avant-garde performances, cultivating an environment that is both progressive and exhilarating.



# Who We Are & What We Believe



**“I LIKE WORK THAT  
MAKES ME THINK...  
AND FEEL.”**

*DJ Subliminal Rabbit, High Performance Rodeo Opening Night*

## **CHALLENGING PERSPECTIVE WITH CAPTIVATING PERFORMANCES**

Immerse yourself in a world of astonishing creativity through extraordinary performances. Experience enchanting dance, witty cabarets, genre-defying musical acts, and breathtaking world premieres.

Prepare to surprise yourself with delightful new discoveries.

## **STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY IN CALGARY AND BEYOND**

Observe the vibrant expansion of Calgary’s creative community, even amidst the cold of January. Renowned international artists collaborate with up-and-coming local talents alongside dedicated volunteers welcoming newcomers into the HPRodeo arena.

# Creativity & Collaboration



## INVENTIVE PERFORMANCES

HPR 2026 featured unique performances and world premieres, showcasing diverse artistic voices in various venues.

*Words in Progress curated by Louise Casemore*

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The festival fostered community through local artist collaboration, volunteer involvement, and inclusive gathering spaces like the Laycraft Lounge.

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# Building Community

## WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

Attendees paint a picture of lively, engaging, and thought-provoking experiences that encourage creativity and community connection, while prioritizing fun and enjoyment.

**FUN**  
**CREATIVE**  
**ENGAGING**  
**JOYFUL**  
**DYNAMIC**

**INCLUSIVE**  
**INSPIRING**  
**SURPRISING**  
**COMMUNITY**  
**EMOTIONAL**



**“100% I’LL BE BACK WITH FRIENDS.”**

**“I’LL RECOMMEND THIS FESTIVAL TO ANYONE WHO WILL LISTEN!”**

**“I HAD A LOVELY TIME WITH MY FRIENDS, AND CAN SEE MYSELF PARTAKING IN A NEW JANUARY TRADITION.”**

**“THOROUGHLY IMPRESSED MY HUSBAND WITH MY GREAT DATE NIGHT!”**

**“IT MADE ME FEEL LIKE A HEALTHIER, FULLER INDIVIDUAL :)”**

# Community Impact

The High Performance Rodeo 2026 is dedicated to welcoming diverse audiences while actively reducing barriers to participation. Through free events, enhanced accessibility, and educational initiatives, we are committed to fostering an inclusive environment that encourages community engagement and artistic exploration.

*Festival laughs*



“ALL WALKS OF LIFE  
COME OUT TO  
EXPERIENCE IT.  
ALL ARE MADE TO  
FEEL WELCOME.”

“BEING A  
UNIVERSITY  
STUDENT STUDYING  
DRAMA I FOUND IT  
EXCITING TO SEE  
SOMETHING I  
WOULD LOVE TO  
TAKE PART IN IN THE  
FUTURE.”

“COMMUNITY, JOY,  
AND EXUBERANCE!  
WE NEED THESE SO  
MUCH IN TODAY’S  
WORLD.”

“IT’S LIKE  
CALGARY’S  
SPECIAL SECRET”

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# By the Numbers

## WHO ATTENDED

- 93% from Calgary
- Attending for the first time (19%) or for 5 or fewer years (55%)
- Shift to younger audiences with 20% reporting to be >40

FESTIVAL ATTENDANCE IN 2026

**15,373**

DAYS

**19**

VENUES

**13**

ARTISTS

**162**

PERFORMANCES

**55**

ASTONISHING  
COMMUNITY FESTIVAL

**1**

# Volunteers Lending a Hand

## IMPACT

Volunteers enhance the festival experience for all.

## SUPPORT

Our volunteers foster community engagement.

## UNITY

Together we build a stronger festival community.

VOLUNTEER HOURS GIVEN

**1225**

VOLUNTEERS

**164**





# Education & Outreach Initiatives

The High Performance Rodeo is committed to fostering connections within the community and creating opportunities for engagement by lowering or removing access barriers.

## REDUCING FINANCIAL BARRIERS...

Fun Free Stuff and Artist / Student passes provide access at low- or no-cost to attendees

## IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY...

ASL interpretation through Inside Out's Good Host Program, plus enhanced venue details on website create a sense of ease experiences for a variety of audiences

## ENHANCING MENTORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES...

Bringing arts education directly to high school students and the BeautifulYoungArtists program provide opportunities for youth and early career artists

Ten Minute Play Festival, CYPT

**"EXPERIENCING THE HIGH PERFORMANCE RODEO REALLY MADE ME FEEL MORE CONNECTED TO THE COMMUNITY AND TRULY INSPIRED THE ARTIST IN ME TO DO MORE AND CREATE MORE."  
SHEA, BEAUTIFUL YOUNG STUDENT**

**NO-COST EXPERIENCES**

**10**

**STUDENTS ENGAGED**

**100+**

**ATTENDEES AT NO-COST ACTIVITIES**

**1081**

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# Community Partnerships

The High Performance Rodeo thrives on robust collaborations with our partners, including Chinook Blast and Werklund Centre. These alliances foster community engagement, stimulate local creativity and provide essential resources for the festival's success and sustainability.

## NEW CONNECTIONS TO EXPAND REACH

A noteworthy addition to this year's festival was a Poster Show showcasing original creations from local artists in partnership with Alberta Printmakers. This collection of meticulously crafted silk-screened artworks honoured the first forty years of the High Performance Rodeo while also envisioning its future. Guests were invited to bid on limited edition prints in support of One Yellow Rabbit during the festival.

HIGH PERFORMANCE RODEO  
& ALBERTA PRINTMAKERS  
POSTER SHOW 2026

**“EXUBERANT, JOYFUL, UNIQUE.  
PLEASE DO THE POSTER SHOW AGAIN!  
IT WAS SUPER GREAT TO HAVE  
VISUAL ARTS IN THE LOUNGE!”**

# Dream Machine

“MADE ME FEEL CONNECTED TO SOMETHING BIGGER THAN MYSELF.”

“I WENT WITH MY CLASS AND WE ARE ALL VERY PASSIONATE ABOUT ACTING. WE TALKED ABOUT DREAM MACHINE FOR WEEKS AFTER.”

The One Yellow Rabitt Ensemble returned to the stage and invited audiences to relive the magic of performance or to experience the wonder for the first time.

*Cast of Dream Machine*

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# Artistic Highlights

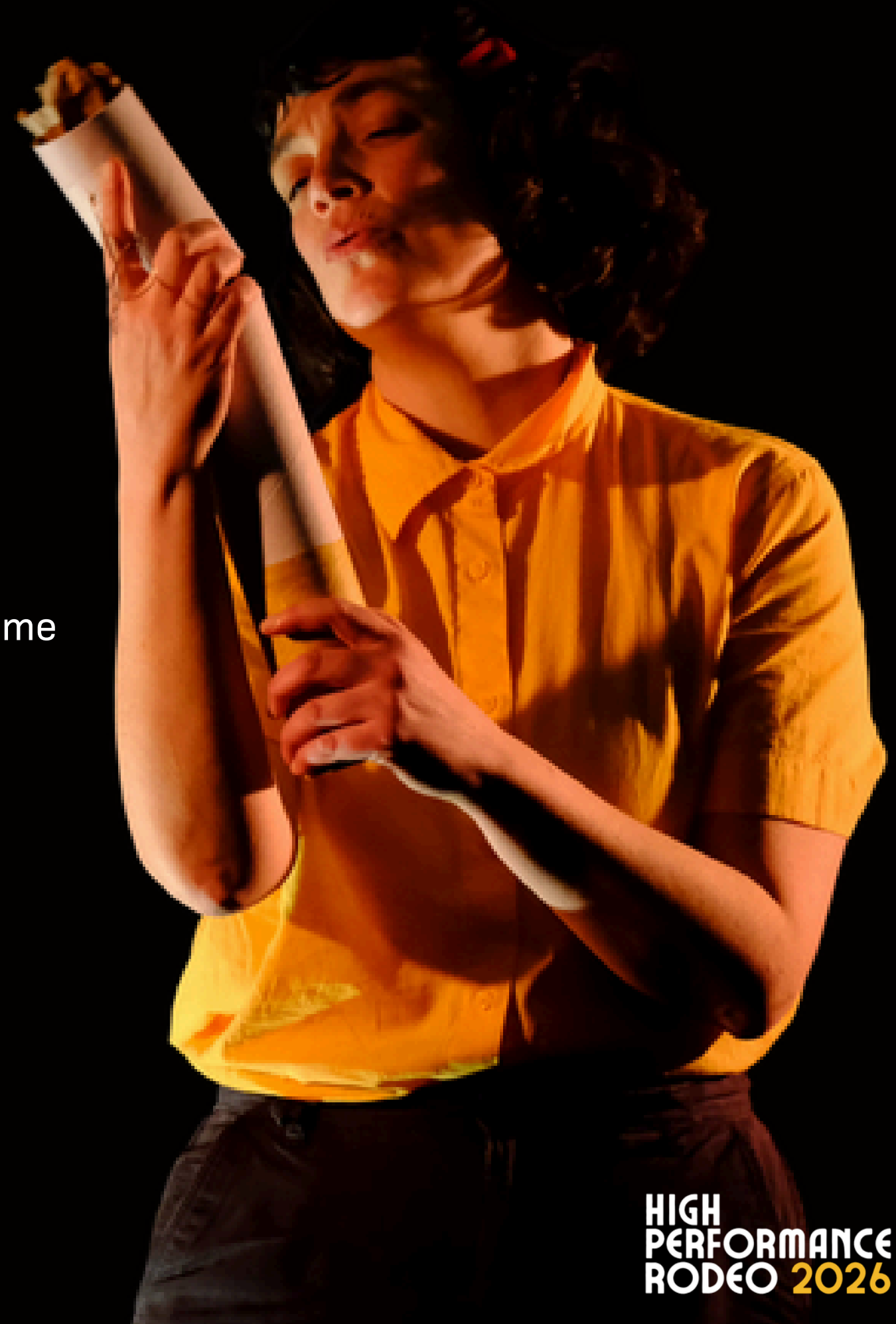
At this year's festival we welcomed returning artists and inventive new creations.

## WE CELEBRATED WITH FRIENDS FROM THE PAST

- Daniel MacIvor in Your Show Here
- The Goblins in Goblin:Gala
- Onalea in The End of the World Cabaret
- Miss Rita's Lucha VaVROOM
- L'orchestre d'hommes-orchestre in Performs Tom Waits
- Shenoah Allan in Bloodlust Summertime
- Vivek Shraya

## WE CREATED SPACE FOR BOLD NEW WORKS

- A Brief History of Smoking Cigarettes
- BeautifulYoungArtists
- Beyond Fallujah
- Poster Show artists
- My Name is Karen
- Ribstone
- I Would Prefer Not To
- Words in Progress



# Audience Feedback

## CELEBRATING CONNECTIONS THROUGH SHARED EXPERIENCES

Audience members expressed enthusiastic appreciation for the festival's creativity and inventiveness, highlighting memorable moments and connections.

**“THE TEN MINUTE PLAY FESTIVAL IS AN EVENING BURSTING WITH CREATIVITY, THOUGHT-PROVOKING STORIES AND LAUGH-OUT-LOUD MOMENTS.”**

**“BODY CONCERT WAS A GREAT SHOW! AMAZING - SIMPLY INCREDIBLE. THIS IS WHAT THE HIGH PERFORMANCE RODEO IS ALL ABOUT. IT WAS MOVING, IT WAS WEIRD, IT WAS HUMAN, IT WAS SPIRITUAL, IT WAS IMMERSIVE”**

**“JULIET: A REVENGE COMEDY WAS SO FUNNY AND BRILLIANTLY EXECUTED! I HAD A SMILE ON MY FACE THE WHOLE TIME. WE ABSOLUTELY LOVED IT!”**

# Community Engagement

The High Performance Rodeo 2026 fostered strong connections through vibrant social media interactions and community engagement.

Attendees actively shared their experiences, amplifying the festival's reach and impact, contributing to a lively dialogue that celebrated creativity and connection across platforms.

Local media coverage exceeded previous years' exposure indicating that Calgary is hungry to learn more and to experience culture first hand.

*In the spirit at Goblin:Gala*

INSTAGRAM

TOTAL VIEWS

**747k**

INTERACTIONS

**11k**

FACEBOOK

TOTAL VIEWS

**1.3M**

INTERACTIONS

**3.7K**

MEDIA

TOTAL HITS

**270**

ARTIST INTERVIEWS

**46**

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# Looking Ahead

## 40 MORE YEARS OF JOY

As we plan for 2027, our commitment to innovative programming remains strong. We aim to engage new artists and productions, fostering creative collaborations that resonate with audiences and champion the dynamic spirit of Calgary's vibrant arts community.



# Community Gratitude



## GIVING TO CREATE CONNECTION

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our generous donors, sponsors, and funders who make the High Performance Rodeo possible. Your support plays an essential role in sustaining our mission to engage and inspire our community through the arts.

*Dream Machine presented by One Yellow Rabbit*

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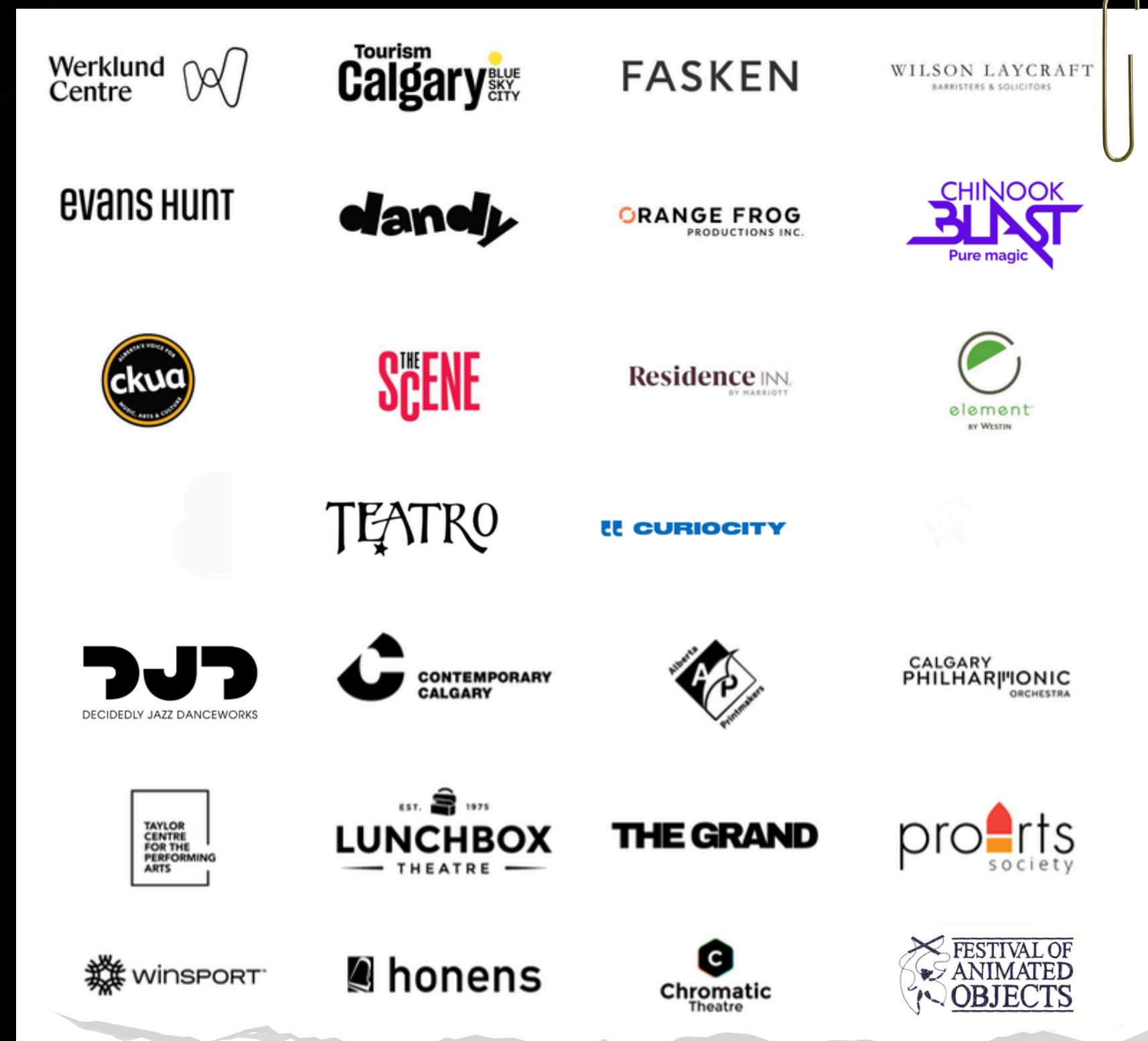


# Festival Collaborations

We are stronger together and are grateful for our community partners.



Celebrating a performance of DOT



# Funders & Supporters

Tremendous gratitude for support from our funders.



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REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

# THANK YOU

To our staff, donors, volunteers, partners, artists and friends.  
May we continue to create, share and celebrate together.



*Goblin:Gala*



The team behind Miss Rita's Lucha VaVOOM