



Chas. Hay
Hey Bear Productions Inc./ Inside The Music
85 Melrose Ave.
Barrie, ON

Sept. 15, 17

Mr. Jeremy Freiburger
Cobalt Connects
80 Queen St. S.
Hamilton, ON

Dear Jeremy,

It was a pleasure meeting with you and discussing the future possibilities for the W.A. Fisher Auditorium. As a live music promoter and long-time Barrie resident I am excited about the potential for the 'new' venue. A state-of-the-art 600+ theatre in our downtown core will be a boon to our city, both culturally and economically, and is sorely needed. The architectural drawings regarding the renovation of the building look incredible. This will be a terrific place to see a play or attend a concert, and it will definitely meet the technical needs of local and touring music artists.

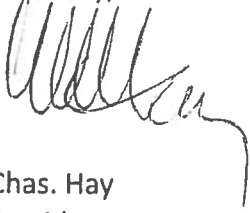
Your suggestion of collaboratively working with other arts organization to deliver great cultural programming to residents is a solid idea. This will help to ensure that the needs of clients and users are met. Theatre marketing, outreach, scheduling, and communicating with the community will all be better served by this arrangement.

The benefits of having a world-class theatre in our downtown, that presents arts lovers with everything from local productions to world-class musicians, are many. As the founder of MusicCo, Central Ontario's Music Council, I am well aware of the economic impact this theatre will have on our city...including job creation and economic growth, tourism development, city brand building, cultural development and artistic growth, and attracting and retaining talent and investment *outside* of the cultural industries.

In order to be successful and optimize the cultural and economic impact for our community, the theatre must be organized and structured, and be selective and creative when booking plays, films, concerts, musicals, talks, comedy shows, and other events that will enrich our city and region. My company, Hey Bear Productions Inc., have been booking and presenting shows across Simcoe County for years and would welcome the opportunity to operate/ program/

curate the new theatre and present world-class events in a space that will impact our city for generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chas. Hay', written in a cursive style.

Chas. Hay
President
Hey Bear Productions Inc./Inside The Music



September 16, 2017

City Council
City of Barrie
Barrie, ON
L4M 4T5

Re: Letter of support

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of Talk Is Free Theatre Board of Directors I am writing in strong support of the proposed conversion of the WA Fisher auditorium into a major performing arts facility.

Talk Is Free Theatre is about to launch its 16th Season. We are Central Ontario's only professional company with a full winter season. To date we produced 82 works in Barrie and on tour, both nationally and internationally. Our vision is to deliver cutting edge theatre works, such as are typically only presented in major urban centres, and connect them with a non-urban audience in Barrie. For that reason, the Mady Centre will play a pivotal role as we continue to tackle grass-roots programming, working with an increasing number of local artists and attracting more youth participants through a variety of programs.

In an effort to provide the community with an increasing access to various forms of the performing arts (that are currently lacking) and to diversify the impact of our work, we have also begun to branch out into larger-scale programming. As of 2013 we have been producing the Barrie International Comedy Festival, inviting internationally significant artists such as Shaun Majumder, Andrea Martin and Brent Butt to appear in Barrie. We are also attracting other artists - singers such as Jann Arden and musical groups such as New Generation Leahy. We are also in discussion to bring popular performances in classical dance.

The regional audiences have seen Barrie venues as an attractive theatre destination. This is due to the strength of programming available, which also includes other groups

such as Theatre by the Bay, Barrie Film Festival and Barrie Concerts among others. Barrie as a regional destination is a more manageable distance than attending special cultural events in Toronto or at Stratford Festival. Local organizations, including the City of Barrie through its own programming efforts, have been able to attract nationally and internationally significant artists. However, hampering the evolution of the local arts sector is the lack of facilities that can support larger audiences. The Georgian Theatre is critical in dealing with this issue. But its present condition is a large barrier to those regional audiences. At present the Georgian Theatre is an aging auditorium, but without the charm of one. The user experience is difficult to say the least. Problems with seats and seating, no professional ambiance, inability to sell refreshments of any kind, ancient technical equipment, sound and other issues in many ways prevents an enjoyable user experience. Above all there is no economic leveraging that the community sees from the disparately located auditorium with no additional experiential attractions such as unique restaurants and shops in the vicinity. It is an acknowledged statistic that for every \$1 spent on a theatre ticket, patrons spend on average \$2.5 on ancillary items, such as dining.

This Friday, for instance, we are seeing sales of \$60,000 for Jann Arden, yet it is quite obvious that the local community is missing out almost entirely on the leveraging effect of \$150,000 simply because there is nothing around the college campus. Therefore relocating such a facility is not only urgent with respect to technical needs of groups and given the general preparedness of the arts sector, but it also makes greater business sense in terms of downtown revitalization.

I urge you very strongly to support this proposal. Should you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Spivak', with a stylized flourish above the name.

Arkady Spivak
Artistic Producer



Mayor J. Lehman and Members of Council

City of Barrie

Sept. 17, 2017

Dear Mayor Lehman and Members of Council,

I am writing to express the Huronia Symphony Orchestra's strong support for the redevelopment of the W.A. Fisher Auditorium into a multi-use performance space for the City of Barrie.

The Huronia Symphony Orchestra (HSO), now in its 51st year in Barrie, has been looking for a home for many years, which is difficult because we are a large group of performers, with associated equipment, and specific requirements.

We have been privileged to be included in the review of the plans, and we are pleased with the thoughtful work which has been done to date. The plans have taken into account all the ideas we have brought to the table, and from there, enhancements have been made to make the space even more functional.

The suggested model for managing this facility, in an open and collaborative manner, ensures that all user groups will be well represented in the operation and use of the facility.

We also support the concept of sharing our assets. The HSO will gladly make our equipment and music library available to our community partners.

The HSO has been limited for many years in its ability to collaborate and innovate with other groups, strictly because of space limitations. This redeveloped venue will allow us to partner and collaborate with other community groups and outside guests. This, in turn, will help to build our audiences, and will even assist us in our grant funding opportunities. We would be honoured to have a facility in the City of Barrie that we can call "home".

Respectfully submitted,

John Hemsted,

President

Huronian Symphony Orchestra

P.O. Box 904, Barrie, ON, L4M 4Y6
president@huroniasymphony.ca



Department of the Creative Economy: WA Fisher Auditorium

Date: September 17th, 2017

The Downtown Barrie Business Association (BIA) Board of Management is proud to provide a letter of support for the City of Barrie - Department of The Creative Economy with respect to the WA Fisher Auditorium renovation and refurbishment.

The Downtown Barrie Business Association (BIA) understands the importance of cultural engagement within the community. The renovation and refurbishment of WA Fisher Auditorium as an 'anchor of the Downtown experience' and in particular the west end of Downtown is bringing together an exemplary proposal of grassroots collaboration that includes not only being a cultural venue but being an economic driver. There is no mistake that a properly positioned & programmed cultural venue can significantly contribute to and support small business that crosses all sectors.

Additionally, WA Fisher Auditorium with its long standing cultural history in Downtown Barrie and its direct connection with the former Central Collegiate Secondary School would be able to continue its cultural & education contribution for decades to come.

The location of WA Fisher also acts as a natural 'gateway' entrance to the west end of Downtown – a great way to introduce our local residents, visitors and potential new development to the Downtown area.

With the opportunity that the WA Fisher Auditorium has to represent and support local arts and culture, support local business and be a natural gateway entering into west end of Downtown Barrie, we are confident that the return of investment will be realized beyond expectations.

Signed on behalf of the Downtown Barrie Business Association (BIA) Board of Management.

Regards,

Craig Stevens

Managing Director

Downtown Barrie Business Association (BIA)



WWW.KEMPENFELTPLAYERS.COM

September 15, 2017

To Whom It May Concern,

I would like to thank the City Cultural Department for arranging input from Barrie performance groups on the renovation of W.A. Fisher Auditorium. As a member representing Kempenfelt Community Players, a theatre group with 40 years' experience performing in Barrie venues, I urge Barrie City Council to move forward on this proposed plan.

KCP looks forward to the opportunity to work in a venue that has such a variety of artistic spaces to work. The size of the stage, seating, rehearsal space, and additional options for performance area / audience area configuration are very exciting. The space meets the needs of the various different performances that our group produces. The opportunity to have an identity linked with one location is critical for any group to establish and maintain audiences. The visibility of such a space in the heart of the city, with access to many other amenities is another positive aspect of the renovated hall. Patrons are often looking to make more of their evening out, and the many restaurants close by, means that patrons will be satisfied and local businesses will benefit from the large performance hall in their vicinity.

KCP is very excited for the opportunity to work collaboratively with other cultural groups who will make Fisher Auditorium their home. With a common single space, we can be more effective in promoting the larger picture of cultural opportunities in Barrie. The marketing possibilities are numerous, and KCP is very interested in participating on a core committee to explore and develop that vibrant cultural picture. The opportunity to share our skills and expertise and learn from other groups as we take a lead role in the operation of the facility is a commitment KCP is ready to provide.

Kempenfelt Community Players looks forward to Barrie City Council's commitment to cultural growth through the W.A. Fisher Auditorium renovation. Thank you for listening to the many cultural voices that have contributed to the plan.

Sincerely,

Julie Underhill
Kempenfelt Community Players



P.O. Box 441, Barrie, ON L4M 4T5

Monday, September 18, 2017

Attn: Onalee Groves, *Manager of Culture*

Creative Economy Department and Culture Branch
City of Barrie, 56 Mulcaster Street,
Barrie, Ontario L4M 3M3

Dear Onalee,

It was great to have the opportunity to participate in the W.A. Fisher Auditorium Study and to discuss the recommendations from CoBALT Connects. We were particularly interested to review the proposed venue design and the technical abilities considered, all essential to creating the best audience experience.

The BFF is a not for profit organization with year-round programming. We host two annual film festivals, develop and carry out student education programs, curate two monthly film series, organize a regional and international short film competition, an outdoor summer series, host guest Q&As, receptions, and facilitate formal and informal talks. Every year the Barrie Film Festival hosts over 150 public screenings, 10+ student screenings and have collaborated with many other organizations and cultural partners through the years. The BFF has presented national and international films in Barrie since 1995 and this year we are celebrating our 20th anniversary for our annual ten-day festival.

The BFF presently leases two screens at the historical Uptown theatre and own state of the art digital cinema screening/sound equipment that we acquired funding for in 2013 through the Ontario Trillium Foundation. We also purchased a P.O.S. ticketing system last year and utilize a comprehensive cloud-based ticketing software solution. Our main auditorium seats 325, the second seats 268.

We see the value in a form of collaborative model of management, and would also welcome the opportunity to explore being a resident organization at the W.A. Fisher theatre.

Our group would like to express our sincere interest in exploring this as a future venue option and are open to discussing what the Barrie Film Festival can offer in terms of equipment and expertise to this project. We believe this is an excellent opportunity and the W.A. Fisher project would be a great asset to the film-loving and cultural community in the City of Barrie.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Claudine Benoit'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'C' and 'B'.

Claudine Benoit
Director, Barrie Film Festival



Monday, September 18th

Alex Dault
Theatre by the Bay
55 Dunlop St. E
Barrie, Ontario
L4M 1A2

Dear City of Barrie,

RE: Letter of Support for W.A.Fisher

I am writing in support for the W.A Fisher Project.

Back in November 2016 I held a retreat with ten local artists and technicians to discuss the future of theatre arts in Barrie. The number one issue identified in a dotting exercise was a lack of affordable rehearsal and performance space.

The central location of W.A Fisher, the fact that it will have a rehearsal studio, as well as its capacity make this a great project for our community.

TBTB will be able to make use of Fisher for larger events, like our Stars Concert (normally attended by at least five hundred attendees), and for our school productions where our audiences sometimes exceed 600 persons.

Finally, as someone with an interest in the history of Barrie, I think it is important that we preserve and honour this building. If you go down to the cenotaph newly moved to the centre of Fred Grant Square (soon to be Meridian Place) the majority of the young men whose names are engraved on that marker were students of Central (called Barrie Collegiate Institute at the time) More than a few were even teachers at the school.

I'd be happy to speak further to any of these points and more generally about the value that this project will bring to Barrie.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ae', written over a white background.

Alex Dault
Artistic Director
Theatre by the Bay

September 18, 2017

Jeremy Freiburger
Cultural Strategist
Cobalt Connects

Sent by email: jeremy@cobaltconnects.ca

Dear Jeremy,

As requested, I am writing to follow up on our discussions regarding the future W.A. Fisher Auditorium/Venue.

Tourism Barrie supports the future plans for the W.A. Fisher facility to seat over 600 people in the main theatre and the additional rooms within the building to hold events for 300 or less. We believe there are great opportunities to not only attract cultural events to the venue but to also attract conferences, speaker series and motivational speakers that have a focus on the business community to use the W.A. Fisher venue. It has been Tourism Barrie's experience that many regional associations are looking for larger venues to hold their annual business conferences and events in Barrie.

Tourism Barrie sees there is a role in facilitating ticket sales, promoting "*Barrie Experiences*" packaging (Theatre, dining and overnight stay packages) and liaising with the hospitality and tourism sectors to further product development opportunities in Barrie. Tourism Barrie has an existing online reservation system, which could be enhanced to sell tickets and integrate with our cultural partners' websites and social media platforms.

As a Destination Marketing Organization, Tourism Barrie is promoting, marketing and working with our cultural partners to increase their audience capacity through tourism. Tourism Barrie is interested in bringing our professional marketing services and expertise to the cultural sector to further enhance the cultural experiences available in Barrie.

Thank you again for giving Tourism Barrie the opportunity to discuss the vision for the future of W.A. Fisher venue.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Trainor
Executive Director