

NEWS RELEASE

Distributed May 19, 2026

Fresh Look, New Energy at the OV Arts Centre

The City-owned venue at 25 Victoria Road is undergoing updates and inviting the community to explore, connect and book the space

Summary

The Old Victoria Arts Centre (OV Arts Centre), Nanaimo's beloved arts venue and cultural hub at 25 Victoria Road, is entering an exciting new chapter. Under the guidance of the Nanaimo Performing Arts Guild – a volunteer advisory body of arts and culture professionals selected by Nanaimo City Council – the venue is experiencing renewed energy, strategic investment and a growing commitment to serving the community.

As part of a multi-year rejuvenation effort, the OV Arts Centre is undergoing significant interior renovations. The entire interior of the venue is being freshly painted and new high-quality flooring is being installed – made possible in part by a generous donation of materials from Interface, a global leader in sustainable flooring solutions. These improvements will create a more welcoming, modern and versatile space for performers, event organizers and audiences alike. Future updates are planned to make the venue even more dynamic, guided by a workplan overseen by the Guild.

The OV Arts Centre is a City-owned, bookable multi-use venue that has hosted everything from professional theatre, dance, and music performances to community gatherings, workshops, celebrations of life, burlesque shows and photo and video shoots. The venue features an accessible ground-floor performing space with a raised stage, flexible seating on risers, lighting and sound provisions, a lobby with box office and concession stand, a greenroom and a basement rehearsal hall. It is one of the most affordable venues in Nanaimo, with rental rates set to encourage use by a diverse range of community members and organizations.

The OV Arts Centre is ready to welcome groups from all walks - a theatre company preparing a production, a musician planning a concert, a community group hosting a meeting or an individual seeking a unique venue for a private event. The Guild and City staff encourage both new and returning users to explore the possibilities this versatile space offers.

The Guild is hosting two Open Houses this spring for anyone to drop in and learn more about the space:

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Wednesday, May 27, 2 - 6 p.m. | Drop-In

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Thursday, June 25, 2 - 6 p.m. | Drop-In

In addition, Guild members hold regular office hours at the OV Arts Centre, during which the venue is open for drop-in visits.

About the OV Arts Centre:

The Old Victoria Arts Centre (OV Arts Centre) is a City-owned performing arts venue and cultural hub located at 25 Victoria Road in Nanaimo, BC. Formerly known as the Harbour City Theatre, it was renovated and reopened in June 2021 under its current name. The venue is managed in partnership with the City by the Nanaimo Performing Arts Guild, a volunteer committee of professionals from Nanaimo's arts and culture community who guide a multi-year plan to improve, maintain and steward the space for broad community use.

Continued... Fresh Look, New Energy at the OV Arts Centre

About the Nanaimo Performing Arts Guild:

The Nanaimo Performing Arts Guild is a volunteer advisory body that supports the OV Arts Centre by providing guidance to City staff on maintaining, operating and improving the venue. Its members bring expertise across a wide range of arts and culture sectors and are committed to keeping the venue accessible, inclusive and affordable for all. The Guild's purpose includes supporting, encouraging and celebrating performing arts activities, increasing public understanding and appreciation of the local arts community and advising on the future creation of additional performance spaces in Nanaimo.

For more information on the OV Arts Centre, visit the [City's website](#).

Strategic Link: The OV Arts Centre and the Nanaimo Performing Arts Guild advance the City of Nanaimo's City Plan by fostering an accessible, inclusive and community-centered cultural hub that strengthens downtown vibrancy, supports local arts and enhances social well-being through affordable creative spaces and collaborative stewardship.

Key Points

- The Old Victoria Arts Centre (OV Arts Centre), Nanaimo's beloved arts venue and cultural hub at 25 Victoria Road, is entering an exciting new chapter. Under the guidance of the Nanaimo Performing Arts Guild, the venue is experiencing renewed energy, strategic investment and a growing commitment to serving the community.
- As part of a multi-year rejuvenation effort, the OV Arts Centre is currently undergoing significant interior renovations.
- The OV Arts Centre is a City-owned, bookable multi-use venue that has hosted everything from professional theatre, dance and music performances to community gatherings, workshops, celebrations of life, burlesque shows and photo and video shoots.

Quotes

"Spaces like the OV Arts Centre are where Nanaimo's creative spirit comes alive. With these updates and the leadership of the Nanaimo Performing Arts Guild, we're strengthening a venue that truly belongs to the community and reflects the vibrancy of our city. I encourage Nanaimo residents and organizations to explore what the OV has to offer."

Leonard Krog
Mayor
City of Nanaimo

"This renovation represents the first step of a new journey for the OV. We're not just refreshing the space – we're sending a message that this venue is open, welcoming, and ready for whatever our community wants to create here. Whether it's a full theatre production, a dance recital, a community celebration, or something entirely new, we want people to know the OV is their space to use."

Wendy Wearne
Chair
Nanaimo Performing Arts Guild

Continued... Fresh Look, New Energy at the OV Arts Centre

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View the online edition for more information -

<https://www.nanaimo.ca/NewsReleases/NR260519FreshLookNewEnergyAtTheOVArtsCentre.html>