

40 YEARS OF THE VANCOUVER

# FRINGE



**TRANSPARENCY REPORT**  
**2023-2024**

# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Because we shifted our Annual General Meeting to October, it's been 15 months since the 2023 Transparency Report. I'm excited to continue our work to increase the transparency within the organization and build trust with our community.

This year presented tremendous challenges for the Fringe. The 2023 Festival went incredibly well and saw us growing back towards the pre-pandemic scale of the Festival. However, the cost of producing the Festival had increased significantly, and without the emergency COVID funding, we were becoming more worried about the organization's financial future.

We made the tough decision to reduce the size of the Festival, to focus on resources and allow us time to build our fundraising. We wanted to ensure that we could be a vital platform for independent artists for another 40 years. We also launched the Future of the Fringe campaign in March 2024, hoping to raise \$80,000 over four months.

Our community responded overwhelmingly. Supporters put up their hands and said the Fringe matters to them. We raised \$55,000 in three months, growing from 165 donors in 2022 to over 700. Most incredible of all, the Canadian government named us in federal budget to receive \$300,000 over two years. Our success was beyond anything I ever could have imagined. We received enormous news coverage because of the campaign, further attention to the importance of the Fringe movement. Thank you to everyone who supported this campaign and helped us secure the future of the Fringe.

This coming year, we will grow our fundraising, and continue to build within our community. We are keen to expand the Mentorship Program we launched this year and deepen our relationship with other artistic organizations through partnerships.

Lastly, we are hoping to welcome new Fringers, helping build audiences for our artists, and bring unconventional performing arts to Vancouver for many years to come.



**Duncan Watts-Grant**  
Executive Director

# THIS YEAR AT A GLANCE

<b>4</b> Full-time staff	<b>350+</b> Volunteers
<b>3</b> Part-time staff	<b>630</b> One-time donors
<b>15</b> Seasonal staff	<b>100</b> Monthly donors

## Salary Bands

Executive Director – \$85,000-\$90,000

Managing Director – \$67,000-\$72,000

Managers - \$55,000-\$65,000

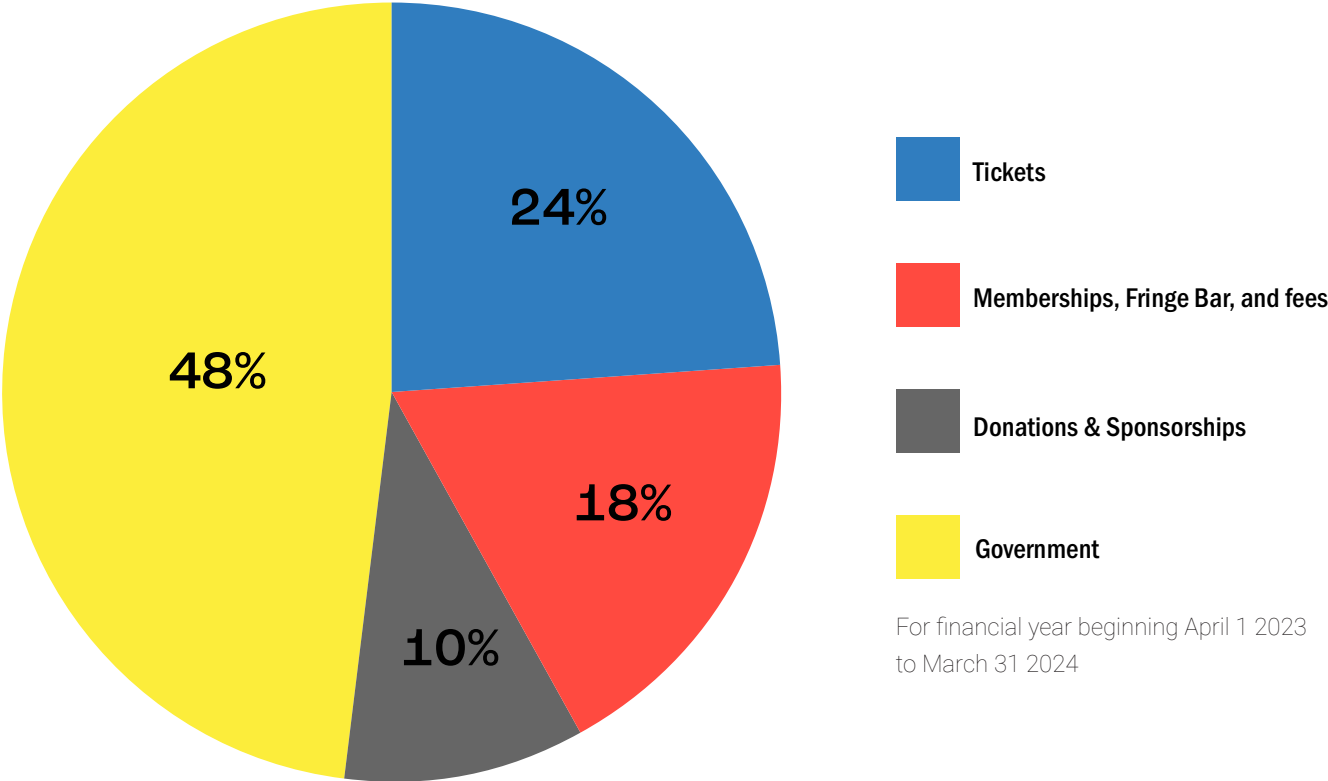
Coordinators - \$50,000-\$55,000

Assistants & Customer Services \$22-\$25 an hour

\*Annual salaries are calculated at 37.5 hours per working week.

# REVENUE

## HOW WE MADE OUR MONEY IN 2023-2024



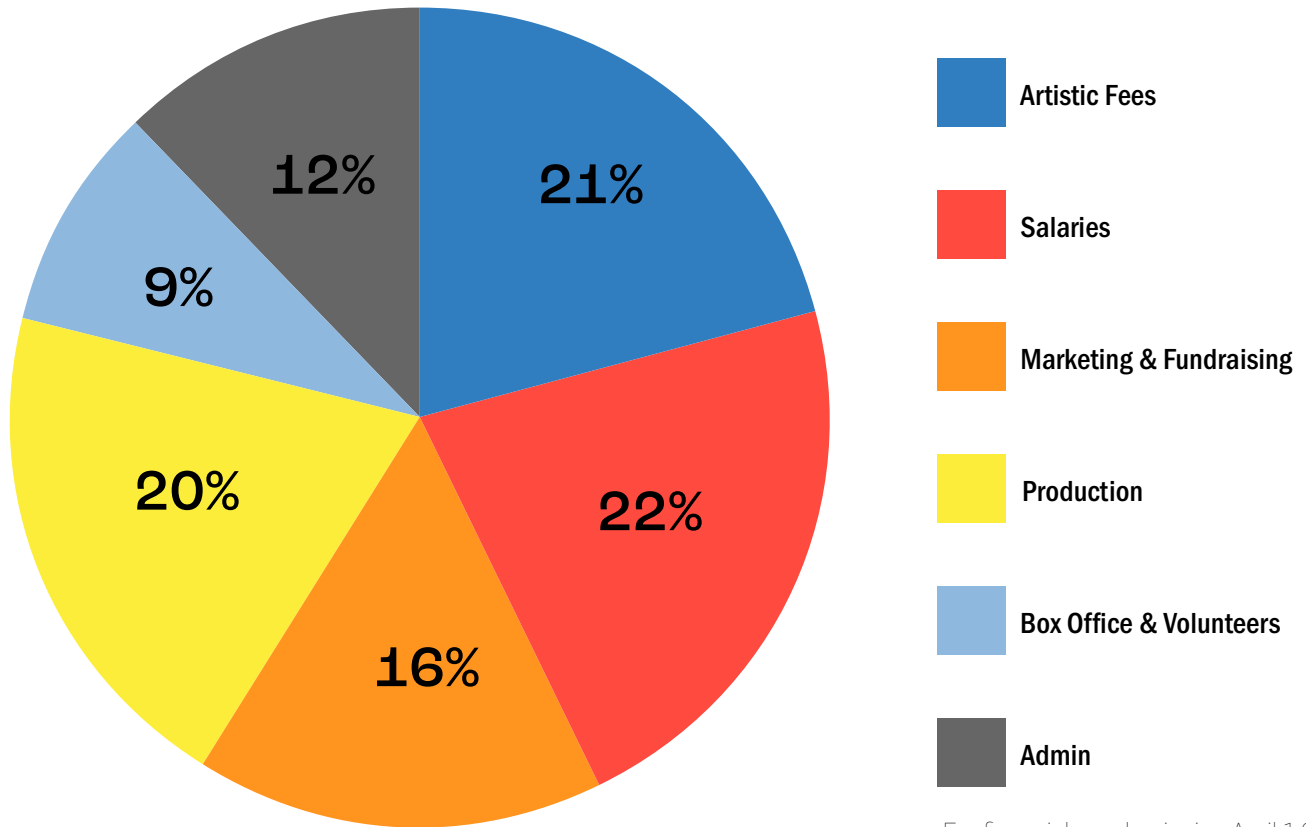
Our big goal for our revenue this year was not only to increase overall revenue, but also to improve the balance, becoming less reliant on government funding. Thanks to our incredible donors and sponsors, we have significantly grown our fundraising.

We want to continue this work, while also thinking critically about how we are structuring our Memberships and ticketing to ensure we are able to cover the hard costs of the Festival while maintaining our mandate of directly supporting artists.



# EXPENSES

## HOW WE SPENT OUR MONEY IN 2023-2024



For financial year beginning April 1 2023 to March 31 2024

With an awareness of the challenging financial situation of the organization, we took immediate steps in 2023 to reduce spending as much as possible, while still maintaining the quality of the Festival.

This included reducing our Mainstage venues from 10 to 5, and returning to a Bring Your Own Venue model that has a lower cost for our organization. We also moved the festival entirely onto Granville Island.

Most of these changes were locked in by the time we concluded our successful Future of the Fringe campaign. We maintained the smaller scale, but with more financial breathing room, made some strategic investments in capital infrastructure to improve the patron and artist experience.

# HOW WE DID ON OUR GOALS FOR 2023-2024

In our last transparency report, we set out a number of goals for this year. Here's how we did.

## Increase equitable representation within the Festival

In 2024, we changed the format of the lottery to guarantee half of the lottery slots to artists of colour. To qualify within the first phase of the lottery, the applying producer had to self-identify as Indigenous, Black or a person of colour.

This change has had a clear and profound impact on who was at the Fringe. In 2024, 359 people applied to the lottery. Of those, 88 self-identified as being artists of colour. Including Bring Your Own Venues (BYOVs) and site-specific shows, more than 50% of participating companies were led by artists of colour, and across the whole festival more than 100 actors, directors, writers, and designers identified as people of colour.

## Create space for feedback

In 2023, we heard a clear call for more opportunities to provide feedback. We had planned to hold two town halls this year, with one focused on artists.

Being honest, we didn't achieve that this year. Part of that was a necessary refocusing on our Future of the Fringe campaign, launched in March 2024. We also sought feedback from artists to determine if a town hall was the right opportunity for feedback, and heard that in fact it wasn't necessarily the best way.

However, we did create a number of new ways to provide feedback. In 2024 we were out in the community more, at other events like Khatsahlano Festival, where we had lots of opportunities to speak with people.

We also created a new Safer Spaces framework as a channel for more serious concerns to be brought forward. We are still working to understand how we can best be available to our community, and would love to hear from you about this!

## **Create financial sustainability for the Fringe**

This was a clear success. In total, we raised \$434,000 from individual givers and government. More importantly, we grew our monthly givers by over 200%. These commitments to give are critical for our continued success, and help create a long term sustainable future for the Fringe.

But there is still more work to do! Since so much of the money raised was in one-time funds, we are continuing to grow our fundraising. We are also considering how we can engage our existing donors and supporters to make sure they feel involved in the work of the Fringe.

## **Deepen our connection to the community**

This goal can be a little hard to measure. We were successful in expanding the awards, partnering with Blackout Theatre who provided an award in 2024 for artists of colour and immigrants. We also are building strong relationships with seasonal presenters, working with Pacific Theatre to present 2023 Fringe hit Travis Abels in March 2025.

There is still more work to do, but we are excited about the connections we are building and the ways our work can deepen thanks to our incredible partners.

# **OUR GOALS FOR 2025**

**With another year ahead of us, we are publishing another set of goals for our next year of operation.**

## **Expand access to the Fringe**

In 2024, we restarted a long-standing partnership with VocalEye, an organization that supports Blind and Partially Sighted people to come to live performing arts. The Fringe believes passionately in ensuring that the Fringe is accessible to as many people as possible. In 2025, we will be growing our capacity to support different access measures for performances at the Festival. Additionally, we are undertaking internal training to improve our own knowledge.

## **Improve Memberships**

We heard loud and clear that Memberships are a significant barrier to coming to the Festival. Beyond the obvious financial barrier, we know they also cause confusion and make transactions more complicated. Simultaneously, they also represent a significant portion of our annual income

that helps us maintain the Festival.

In 2025 we will be looking at modifications or full changes we can make to the Membership system to improve access to the festival, and help us grow our community of Fringers.

## **Build our audience relationship**

We have heard from artists that moving the Festival fully onto Granville Island has been successful. We are seeing steady audience engagement, and a consistent returning cohort of Fringers. Now we want to not only grow our audience, but also increase engagement with audiences. We want to encourage anyone who came to one performance in 2024 to come to two in 2025. We want to help develop new audiences and encourage different communities to come to the Fringe. And we want to see the overall average attendance of all our shows increase.

In 2025 we will grow our average attendance beyond 52% across all performances in the Festival. (For reference, in 2023 this number was 45%)