

Chairman's Report

As noted in my report to last year's AGM, following the 2025 Festival, there were a few challenges that needed to be worked out. I was under the (naïve) impression that once those challenges were identified and resolved, we'd be off to the races - so to speak. Well, it turns out that no matter how prepared one thinks they are, the universe always finds a way to fit that wrench in somehow. And while I have come to the realization that there will always be challenges ahead, I have confirmed through experience that as long as you surround yourself with individuals that you trust, everything will find a way to resolve itself. It is a privilege, and the greatest accomplishment of my life to have the opportunity to work with the Society, this Board, our General Manager, and our over 100 volunteers each year.

The success of this year's Festival season could not have happened without the dedicated hard work of our General Manager, Jaimee Jarvie. Jaimee has been an integral part of successfully growing this Festival year after year since her appointment in the fall of 2022. Not only have the number of our participants risen year-over-year, but the relationships that Jaimee has created between the Festival and local performers, schools, teachers, directors, and instructors is nothing short of monumental. The enthusiasm that she inspires in our participants, their parents, and their teachers/instructors is also incredible to witness. While it is always good to hear that our total participant count has grown during her tenure, but our registration numbers for 2026 were the highest they've been for many years, coming in at just under 1,000 registrations! To put that into perspective, when Jaimee first came on-board, we received 642 registrations; this year's registrations showed growth by more than 50% in just 3 years. In addition to her role as our GM, Jaimee also continues to serve on the Board of Directors for AMFA - Alberta's Provincial music Festival Association - a position they are lucky to have her fill. We are confident that Jaimee remains the right person for this job, and we are so grateful to have her by our sides. Jaimee, I speak on behalf of the Society as a whole when I say "thank you" for all that you do for this Festival.

Working alongside Jaimee is a group of individuals without whom the Festival simply could not operate; our Board of Directors. Members of the Board have been tasked with both governance and administration. Throughout the duration of each Festival, they each give their time generously as working Board members to work in tandem with Jaimee to make sure the Festival runs as smoothly as possible for both our participants and attendees. The committees charged with providing the necessities for a smooth Festival season are Hospitality, Logistics, Volunteer, and Technology. In a more "behind the scenes" environment, our Board members also belong to Board governance committees; Policies & Bylaws, Finance, Nominations, Fundraising, Awards & Scholarships, Personnel, and Marketing. Every year, a lot of work goes into making our Festival look and feel as smooth as possible, and I would like to extend my gratitude and congratulations to my Board colleagues for helping to make this year as successful as it was.

Finally, I'd like to take a moment to recognize the hard work of our outgoing Board member, Keelan Cashmore, who joined the Board in 2023. Keelan's wealth of knowledge and experience working with numerous other non-profits has been truly invaluable. Her work to implement our online volunteer sign up process, her experience-guided advice while planning our inaugural fundraising gala, and her assistance with new avenues of volunteer outreach cannot be overstated. On behalf of the Society, I would like to express our deepest gratitude for your commitment to our Festival over the past 3 years. Thank you, Keelan, and we wish you nothing but good luck with all the future has in store for you!

Thank you all, and I look forward to working with you to ensure the success of our 2026/2027 Festival season!