



# DEBATES OF THE SENATE

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1st SESSION

• 44th PARLIAMENT

• VOLUME 153

• NUMBER 76

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## **WINNIPEG'S ARTISTIC COMMUNITY**

Statement by:  
The Honourable Patricia Bovey

Tuesday, November 1, 2022

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### WINNIPEG'S ARTISTIC COMMUNITY

**Hon. Patricia Bovey:** Honourable senators, important artistic expression emanates from all our regions. Today I celebrate Winnipeg — a unique vibrant hub since the 1820s and home of many Canadian arts firsts. Winnipeg's gritty and innovative creativity drives so much in Canadian creative expression.

Anniversaries are important to celebrate. Founded in 1912, Canada's first civic art gallery, the Winnipeg Art Gallery, is 110.

At 98, Théâtre Cercle Molière — the oldest theatre company in Canada, French or English — born in 1925, has always been and remains a driving force in the cultural life of French-speaking Manitoba.

The Royal Winnipeg Ballet, at 84, is the second-oldest ballet company in North America and the oldest surviving dance company in Canada, first organized as a ballet club in 1938 by English dance teachers Gweneth Lloyd and Betty Farrally.

The Royal Manitoba Theatre, at 75, is Canada's first regional theatre, founded by John Hirsch and Tom Hendry in 1958.

Winnipeg is indeed the home of internationally acclaimed authors, composers, musicians, dancers, choreographers, visual artists, filmmakers and architects.

Today, I celebrate the golden anniversary of a number of Winnipeg organizations. The year 1972 was a rich, heady and artistically inspiring time in our provincial capital, and that

energy continues. Prairie Theatre Exchange — the home of much experimental theatre — celebrates local by presenting plays and readings by local playwrights, and showcasing local and national talent. Manitoba Opera performs classics, commissions new operas and works collaboratively with many opera companies.

The Manitoba Chamber Orchestra brings the best of classical and contemporary chamber music, heralding young and well-known talent. The Association of Manitoba Museums has raised the professionalism and profiles of Manitoba's large and small museums. These organizations have survived floods, blizzards, COVID, economic downturns, as well as connected with audiences in new ways, mentored young creators and transformed cultural engagement. Each organization is a feature in Canada's cultural constellation.

The year 1972 also saw the formation of the Indigenous Group of Seven artists, including Jackson Beardy, Daphne Odjig, Norval Morrisseau and Alex Janvier. Their first public exhibition was at the Winnipeg Art Gallery that year. Colleagues, I was there. Winnipeg's excitement was infectious. As a Manitoban, I am so proud of their pioneering work, their contributions to Canada's arts constellation and the support they give to our city and province.

I congratulate all involved — then, since and now — including the leaders, staff, volunteers and donors, for their steadfastness, vision, determination, dynamism, professionalism and engagement. Canada and Manitoba are richer for it in myriad ways. Winnipeg's artistic innovations continue, defining our spirit and insights, regardless of weather and mosquitoes!

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