

Jean-Louis Bleau
Executive Arts Leader | Artistic Director
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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Senior arts executive and artistic leader with more than 20 years of experience in cultural leadership, arts administration, programming, and post-secondary education. Experienced in leading complex arts organizations, strengthening financial and operational performance, developing distinctive artistic programming, and building meaningful community and cultural partnerships. Brings together executive leadership and artistic practice, with experience spanning performing arts presentation, interdisciplinary creation, education, audience development, and international cultural exchange.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Executive Director, Chilliwack Cultural Centre, Chilliwack, BC | 2022–Present

The Chilliwack Cultural Centre is a multidisciplinary arts hub encompassing a 590-seat theatre, 160-seat studio theatre, art gallery, education studios, and event spaces, with 30+ staff and an annual operating budget exceeding \$2.5 million.

- Provide executive leadership across artistic programming, operations, finance, human resources, partnerships, contracts, audience development, and organizational strategy.
- Led revenue diversification and cost-management strategies that generated a 203% year-over-year financial improvement and returned the organization to surplus within the first two years.
- Drove audience growth through expanded programming, membership and ticket-access initiatives, data-informed marketing, and patron-retention strategies, contributing to an 11% year-over-year increase in ticket sales.
- Strengthened the Centre's role as a community arts hub, increasing support for Resident Companies and community arts organizations by nearly 40% year over year.
- Expanded artistic programming and community engagement through partnerships with local, national, Indigenous, and community-based artists and organizations.
- Advanced new approaches to earned revenue, sponsorship, rentals, pricing, CRM, and digital patron engagement while balancing artistic ambition with long-term financial sustainability.
- Lead a collaborative organizational culture focused on accessibility, community relevance, artistic exploration, and an exceptional patron experience.

Interim Director & Manager of Operations, Mount Royal University Conservatory, Calgary, AB | 2015–2022

Mount Royal University Conservatory is a major arts education institution encompassing a 773-seat concert hall, teaching studios, classrooms, and rehearsal facilities, with an annual budget exceeding \$5 million and more than 100 faculty and staff.

- Provided operational and administrative leadership across budgeting, staffing, program development, facilities, scheduling, and organizational planning.
- Led a significant organizational reorganization to improve program efficiency, resource allocation, and operational effectiveness.
- Supported the delivery and growth of a broad portfolio of music education and performance programs serving children, youth, adults, and pre-professional artists.
- Advanced international engagement through cultural partnerships and exchange initiatives with organizations in China.

Artistic Director, Choral Programs & Artio, Mount Royal University Conservatory, Calgary, AB | 2011–2022

Led the artistic direction of Mount Royal University Conservatory's choral programs, encompassing ensembles for children, youth, and adults.

- Directed artistic vision, repertoire, performance standards, and program development across the Conservatory's choral programs.
- Revitalized the choral program through renewed artistic direction, expanded repertoire, and a stronger emphasis on performance excellence.
- Founded and developed **Artio**, an interdisciplinary choral-theatre ensemble integrating music, theatre, movement, and design.
- Created collaborative and interdisciplinary performance experiences that expanded the traditional boundaries of choral performance.

Music Faculty, University of Calgary, Calgary, AB | 2016–2024

- Redeveloped the Chamber Choir, strengthening student participation, artistic quality, and audience engagement.
- Taught **Approaching Interdisciplinarity**, a core Fine Arts course exploring cross-disciplinary artistic practice and collaboration.

Earlier Artistic Leadership

- **Artistic Director, Cum Vino Cantus, Calgary, AB | 2009–2018**
Shaped the ensemble's artistic identity through distinctive programming and collaborative performance projects, expanding its visibility, partnerships, and presence within Calgary's arts community.

- **Artistic Director, Calgary Men's Chorus, Calgary, AB | 2006–2015**

Led a significant period of artistic development, introducing innovative concert concepts that broadened the ensemble's repertoire, strengthened membership and community engagement, and challenged traditional approaches to choral performance.

EDUCATION

Master of Music (Conducting)

University of Calgary, Calgary, AB | 2011

Bachelor of Arts in Music (Composition and Musicology)

University of Calgary, Calgary, AB | 2005

SELECTED HONOURS & RECOGNITION

Innovation Award — Unison Festival | 2023

Recognized for innovation in choral and artistic practice.

Con Spirito Award — Choir Alberta | 2018

Recognized for significant contribution to Alberta's choral community.

Top 40 Under 40 — Avenue Magazine, Calgary | 2014

Recognized among Calgary's leading emerging professionals for leadership and community impact.

Teaching Excellence Award — Mount Royal University

Recognized for excellence and impact in post-secondary teaching.

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL & CIVIC LEADERSHIP

Panelist, Association of Asia-Pacific Performing Arts Centres Conference, Taipei | 2024

Presented on bridging performing arts centres and communities, with a focus on cultural representation, engagement, and partnership development.

Committee Member, Chilliwack Creative Commission | 2024–Present

Advise on strategies supporting growth in Chilliwack's creative sector, including film, interactive, and digital media.

Committee Member, City of Chilliwack Public Art Advisory Committee | 2023–Present

Contribute to public art policy and the integration of public art within the community.