



Probis Club of Central Edmonton Newsletter

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Editor: Ken Hoffman

Website: www.probus-central-edmonton.com

Email: probus.cent.ed@gmail.com

May 20 Anne Marie Petrov

Anne Marie Petrov, President and CEO of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra and the Winspear Centre presented "The Business of Music". She started by acknowledging that that many of our members were part of the Winspear family and noting that she misses us.

Anne started with discussing the combined organization of ESO and WC. The combined budget is \$60 million a year, pre-covid. They employ staff from custodial, to full time musicians, as well as part time staff and musicians. When discussing the importance of ESO to Edmonton, she pointed to a 2-day outdoor concert that took place in 2014 in Churchill square, it was attended by 12,000 people. So why have an orchestra? The "Core Purpose" answers this when it states, "Fulfill the human need to make and share music".

The organization core values tell us what this means:

- We love music
- We bring our best
- We're all in this together
- We try new things
- You matter

The orchestra is about 70 years old, and it has 56 regular musicals plus some part time musicians. They play 9 months a year. She explained the commitment a musician had to make to the job, it was considerable. Also, she discussed the need for professional full-time members.

Dr Francis Winspear was on great citizen and on the original board of directors. His gift to the organisation was the largest gifts to an art organization in history. It was used to build the current facility. Winspear is a premier venue and one of the best in North America. It opened in 1997. The centre runs community outreach programs. One is the Yona Sistema, which is a program in 2 inner city schools for under privileges children. Students start by making their own instrument, which they are required to take care of before getting an actual violin. A second program was developed to work with Parkinson's patients. When participants play music, they do not shake as bad. She then spoke about several other programs that they put on. The Organization has a broad impact on music scene in Edmonton.

The Orchestra members are members of a union. There are 100 to 300 musicians per year, including the 56 core musicians. The Orchestra is incorporated under the Societies Act. The Winspear Centre is incorporated under Article 9 of the Corporations Act. The Board of the Winspear Centre is also the Board of the Orchestra. Management staff of one organization are staff of the other, these 2 legal entities are truly integrated.

The strategies are:

- Be a true centre of music
- Deliver exceptional experiences
- Inspire musical creativity

- Build resiliency and sustainability

These 4 strategies drive their actions and advocacies.

They are building expansion to the Winspear Centre. Construction is underway. It will cost \$73 million to build the three major components.

- District energy plant for several downtown building
- A commercial component including a parking lot and future commercial space
- And, the actual building

Ann Marie set out the business of music in Edmonton in a compelling manner. We were able to see the central importance of music to Edmonton. Many of us look forward to the opening of Winspear to the public.

May 27 Debbie Beaver

Debbie Beaver director of the Black Settler of Alberta and Saskatchewan Society described the contribution of black settlers to our society. Debbie has deep roots in Alberta her ancestors migrating to Canada from the USA. Her presentation entitled “A quest for Freedom” was about black settlers which came to western Canada from several of the southern states. Black immigration into Canada started 1783, these people had fought for British side during the war of independence. They settled in eastern Canada. The wave ended when upper Canada passed a law forbidding it. Next was about 30,000 American slaves who migrated via the underground railway. This happened from 1800-1850. We were introduced to John Ware who moved to Alberta in about 1882 as part of the discussion of early immigration to Alberta. He introduced longhorn cattle and pioneered the development of the rodeo in Alberta. Some of his descendants live in Edmonton. From 1908-1911 about 1,00 to 1,500 people migrated to Alberta and Saskatchewan. This was in response to newspaper ads. They were not well received by white and indigenous people in the areas that they settled. These areas were remote and not necessarily good for farming.

She shared a newspaper ad that set out the criteria the people had to meet to be allowed into Canada. Ultimately, a petition with thousands of signatures on it was provided to the prime Minister requesting the end to black immigration. Immigration ended in 1912.

In Alberta, immigrants settled in 4 rural areas and the 2 major cities (Edmonton and Calgary). She shared with us the location of the 4 settlements, these were:

- Amber Valley established about 1911 some 100 miles north of Edmonton. It thrived until the 1930's. One claim to fame was the baseball team which was highly successful and brought the community together.
- Breton was established about 1910 and was about 1.5 hours southwest of Edmonton. Its first construction was the Good Hope Baptist Church. The Keystone cemetery is a historic site. They also established a school.
- Campsie is about 90 miles NW of Edmonton. There were Scottish settlers in the area. A Baptist Church was established, and a cemetery was started. The first school was initially segregated.
- Wildwood was 90 miles west of Edmonton. It was the most prosperous of the 4 communities. 2 schools were established. As well as a church and cemetery.

Blacks also settled in the Maidstone area in Saskatchewan. It was largest black settlement in Sask. There were other areas where small number of blacks settled. Farming was poor. The Church and cemetery have been restored. It has now been designated as a historical site.

She shared with us the challenges black settlers faced for example schools were segregated, and they were not allowed to be buried with whites. Much of the farmland was poor. Also, they faced racism. The video she shared was of a woman and her family. She was born in 1929 in Amber Valley. She

married a musician the lived in several places such as Edmonton and Vancouver. As a black person, she faced racism, for example she could only eat at one restaurant.

The Black Settlers of Alberta and Saskatchewan Society was started in 2005. Its purpose is to archive and document material to educate, promote and officially recognize the historical role of Black Settlers. Blacks have lived, worked, and contributed greatly to the prairie provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan.

The presentation was enlightening, and it was interesting to hear to story of black settlers. She handled the many questions patiently.