

AN INTERVIEW WITH BRUCE KELLETT

By Eleanor Ryrie, Planned Giving Officer, March 2020

Bruce Kellett is a Legacy Circle member. He wore many hats at the Arts Club from 1971 to 2016, including music director, pianist, arranger, and composer. Below, Eleanor Ryrie chats with Bruce about his magical years at the Arts Club.



Bill Millerd & Bruce Kellett

As the Arts Club's musical director, Bruce conducted and arranged the music for more than 100 productions at the original Arts Club on Seymour Street, the Granville Island Stage, the Granville Island Revue Stage, and the Stanley Industrial Alliance Stage. When asked which songs and plays stand out most in his mind, he said: "Too many to count, but I have a soft spot for Jacques Brel and the musicals *Ain't Misbehavin*, *West Side Story*, and *Les Misérables*."

Read on for more of Bruce's backstory and life-long relationship with music.

Where did your love of music come from?

I have been playing the piano since the age of five. My mother was a church organist, which influenced my love of music as a child. At UBC, I studied a unique combination of chemistry and music, where I joined MUSSOC (UBC Musical Theatre Society). I had read about MUSSOC in the newspaper as a kid growing up in Prince George and couldn't wait to be a part of it. I joined in my first year at university. I spent the first year in the chorus before becoming the rehearsal pianist.

How and when did you first become involved with Bill Millerd and the Arts Club?

Our paths first crossed at UBC in 1969. I was the rehearsal pianist for MUSSOC, and Bill directed *West Side Story*. Bill had co-written a children's musical, *The Enchanted Forest*, which he was directing. He was looking for someone to play and arrange the music and asked me if I would be interested. It was the beginning of a long and respectful partnership.

Describe your role as music director.

My role was to arrange the music and rehearse the singers and musicians to be performance-ready, working closely with the director and choreographer. It could take about three or four months to arrange a show because I may have been working with a Broadway score of twenty or more musical instruments that I had to reduce to only six. On average, it took about 50-150 hours for me to arrange a show (although a show with music like *Les Misérables* might have required 400 hours.)

Can you explain the process of creating a musical?

At the Arts Club, there are generally three weeks of rehearsal for any project. Typically, I would first work with the singers to learn their solos and songs, be it the lead performers or the chorus. Then would come the staging of the book scenes and choreography.

At any one time, we could have had up to three different rehearsals happening simultaneously. The director would be rehearsing one scene, the choreographer would be working with performers on a dance piece, and I would be rehearsing with singers. Each show was different, depending on the demands for the actors, dancers, and singers.

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In the third week, the band would join the cast, and it was an exciting time as the ensemble progressed from singing with a single piano to a six-piece band. Finally, the whole piece would come together with lights, music, costumes, and action in a full technical and then dress rehearsal on a beautifully designed set.

How do you work with the director and choreographer?

As musical director and choreographer, our roles were to understand and support the vision of the director and help bring that vision to life. To understand this vision, I would actively listen to the director and make sure I understood his or her interpretation of the musical and the motivation for making certain decisions. I would ask lots of questions, do careful research, and offer suggestions when appropriate. We worked as a team—an ensemble.

How long does it take to get the cast ready for a musical?

About four weeks. It's pretty quick and intense.

Do you have an all-time favourite musical?

West Side Story. Great music and a great band.

What do you appreciate about musicals?

As music director, I would play as well as conduct the band at every performance. The director and choreographer have to step back from the show after opening night, but I was in a unique position where my role was part of the live performances until closing night.



Bruce receiving his Legacy Circle pin
from Ashlie Corcoran

How have things changed over the years?

Electronic music has significantly changed over the years. I used an electronic keyboard for the first time in 2000. I then began using MainStage, a music program from Apple, to help with arranging the music, and this kind of tool made the job somewhat easier.

Why do you think it's important to support the arts?

I joined the Legacy Circle because I have had a fantastic career working with Bill Millerd, bringing joy and music to so many people. I want to ensure the future of artists and performers who continue to bring laughter and tears into an unforgiving world. Art comes from our souls. Through music and theatre, we can speak to intangible and unquantifiable emotions that enrich us as human beings and bring us together.

LEAPING INTO THE FUTURE

LEAP (Learning Early About Playwriting), is a dynamic, interactive program for young playwrights aged 16 to 25. Over 165 students have been mentored through the creation of original works since the program's inception in 2006. Participants learn the basic principles of playwriting, share their work with classmates, and provide feedback for one another in a safe and supportive environment. Students also receive feedback from theatre professionals and have their plays workshopped and presented to the public in staged readings.

LEAP is a full-scholarship program, and is 100% funded by donors and sponsors. There is no cost to the student whatsoever. Instruction is offered in three levels: Level 1 students are mentored through the creation of a short play (10 minutes), Level 2 students write one-act plays, and a Level 3 student is supported through the creation of a full-length play.

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Why was this program created?

LEAP gives an accessible opportunity for young writers to hone their craft in storytelling. The program contributes to developing new local playwrights, thus, new local stories. Since the program is free, it is accessible for people of all backgrounds, fostering diversity and making sure different voices are heard in our local culture. A meaningful amount of students who graduated from LEAP have developed a career in the arts as playwrights, performers and teachers. Some examples are Scott Button and Zahida Rahemtulla, who were part of the Arts Club's 2018-19 Emerging Playwrights Unit.

Who participates?

Participants are either high school students, post-secondary students in creative writing, recent graduates of performing arts post-secondary institutions, or emerging artists.

When is the program?

The program runs from November to May, and culminates in the LEAP Festival; a series of public staged readings of the students' plays, performed by professional actors.



Veronique West

How is the program instructed?

In the LEAP program, the cohort meets weekly with Program Leader Shawn Macdonald and Program Assistant Veronique West as they work on developing playwriting structures, completing assignments, reading other students' work and providing feedback.

Digital LEAP, an outreach component of the Arts Club's LEAP Playwriting Intensive, extends our playwriting instruction across the province. This program reaches smaller communities in British Columbia and engages directly with the youth by offering online instruction. Ten online classes are offered to the participating students, whose work is shared with their classmates and feedback is offered in a safe and supportive environment via a web-based video conferencing software.



Each student is guided through the creation of a short original play, which is then workshopped by a cast of professional actors. The workshopping process is streamed from the Arts Club in Vancouver directly to the students' computer. The program culminates in a showcase of play readings that take place in front of a live audience at the Arts Club's BMO Theatre Centre and the entire event is streamed live to the participating communities.

LEAP and Digital LEAP are generously supported by Bonnie Mah, Kate Dahlstrom, Art Vertlieb & Bev Briscoe, Bonnie & Terry Gordon, Lee Grills, the Y.P. Heung Foundation, Eldorado Gold, ITC Construction Group and the RBC Emerging Artists Project.

Thank you to Richard Bell and Bell Alliance Lawyers & Notaries Public for their continued support and sponsorship of the Legacy Circle program. For assistance with planning for your future, visit the [Bell Alliance website](#) for more information.



CONSIDER DONATING WITH SECURITIES AND ELIMINATE CAPITAL GAINS TAX

By Robert J. Sharman, Senior Vice President & Senior Wealth Advisor, BMO Nesbitt Burns Inc.



In an effort to increase charitable donations, the tax law allows for the full elimination of any capital gains tax on donations of publicly-traded securities to a registered charity. Qualified securities may include shares, exchange traded fund (ETFs) and bonds listed on a prescribed stock exchange and shares/units of mutual funds.

If you are planning to make a charitable donation this year, consider this tax saving strategy; especially if you've already made the decision to sell some of your current investments to provide the cash to fund this donation.

By donating securities directly, you have an opportunity to reduce the tax you would otherwise have to pay on the sale of your investments. As with any sale, a donation of securities is considered a disposition for tax purposes. However, as a result of these tax incentives, the taxable capital gain that would otherwise be realized on a donated publicly-traded security can be eliminated.

Making a donation of securities is a great strategy to maximize your tax savings and at the same time impact the Arts Club's new play development and education initiatives. To learn more, please contact our Legacy Planning department, who can work with your financial advisor to help you.

[Click here](#) to access the Arts Club Securities Donation Form, or contact us directly at 604.687.5315, ext. 281.

Example	Sell securities for cash then donate after-tax proceeds	Donate securities directly to a registered charity
Original Cost of Securities	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
Current Market Value	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00
Capital Gain	\$40,000.00	\$40,000.00
Taxable Capital Gain	\$20,000.00 (50%)	\$0
Marginal Tax Rate	40%	40%
Tax payable	\$8000.00	\$0



Over time, the Arts Club has seen a monumental growth within our community and we are delighted to continually bring patrons together to experience world-class theatre. Much of this growth has only been possible with the generous help of our donors, and we rely on these individuals to look forward to the future.

Leaving a legacy gift is an ideal way to be remembered as a dedicated benefactor of the arts and to help the Arts Club achieve a long and vibrant future.

If you are one of our guardian angels and have already left a gift in your estate, please join our Legacy Circle and allow us to thank you and ensure your wishes are honored.

If you are considering a legacy gift and would like additional information about our options, please contact Eleanor Ryrle, Planned Giving Officer at 604.687.5315, ext.281 or at eryrie@artsclub.com. **Thank you!**



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LEAP Students, photo by Moonrider Productions. LEAP Festival 2019, photo by Moonrider Productions. Nicola Cavendish in *Glorious*, photo by Tim Matheson, costume design by Phillip Clarkson.