**Words from the stage:**

[*Please personalize this as you wish! If you are short on time, perhaps have them text to get the link, and they can complete the rest of the steps after the performance or visit. It is important that we use the message below to inspire immediate action in order to get the largest response possible.*]

Ahead of the election at the end of May, we would like to take a brief moment to amplify a call for more arts funding in Alberta. Despite increased government expense budgets, high inflation, and growing population, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts funding has been cut back by 27% (almost $10 million) since 2009. This funding is crucial to the health of Alberta arts and culture, which has also been decimated by Covid-19.

The Rozsa Foundation and the CCVO have started a non-partisan effort called VoteArtsAB and are asking to double the AFA budget over the next three years – that is an additional one one-hundredth of one percent of the budget a year (0.0124%) from a budget of over $68 billion.

Before you put your phone away, we are hoping you can take it out for a moment and text ARTS to **587-875-5751**. Doing this will ensure that a letter is sent to every party leader asking that they pledge to increase funding to the AFA in support of Alberta artists and arts organizations. There is no cost, and no endorsement of one party over another – just a step to make sure that our political leaders are aware of the importance of the arts in the province, and that Albertans like you support an increase in funding.

In fact, let’s do it together! [Sample walk-through] We’re going to send a text message, and the number is 587-875-5751, and then the message is ARTS – it doesn’t matter if it is upper or lower case or a mix. Now, you’ll get a text back with a link, so go ahead and visit that link. I will fill out my information, thankfully I have autofill! Then below is the template letter, written by the Rozsa Foundation. I’m going to skim through that to make sure I agree. And send letter! Wonderful. Now we can feel like we have done our civic duty in support of the arts and can enjoy this wonderful show – paid in part by grants from the government!

You can also help spread the word by visiting VoteArtsAB.com and using their helpful posts on social media with the hashtag #VoteArtsAB to make sure as many Albertans as possible can make their voices heard.

On behalf of all of us in the arts in this province (over 46,000 people), thank you.