



Mission Statement

Vancouver Tap Dance Society strives to be a leader in promoting and preserving tap dance and is dedicated to developing awareness of the art form. Our mandate includes the Tap Academy, Vancouver International Tap Festival, and TapCo, a youth performance ensemble and Outreach Program providing instruction to hundreds of children each year.

Report from the President

Karen Gram, President

Reflecting back to the past year, I see so many accomplishments that the board and staff of VanTap have realized. It gives me great pride to see our society flourish and grow.

Last year, we saw our academy increase by 10%. We all witnessed the amazing talent of our dancers and teacher/choreographers at the year end show.

We also have a new website and new customer software that allows us to communicate so much more effectively.

At the board level, we developed a more strategic board, coordinated a VTDS survey, transitioned new administrative staff, reviewed various organizational policies and procedures and plan to implement new policies in the next season.

Snow prevented us from hosting our annual Winter fund-raiser this year. This is a significant component of our fund-raising and cancelling it caused us some distress, but our spring dance was a great success helping to collect much of the lost winter revenue and we plan to add it to our regular events.

Sas announced her plans to retire June next year, creating a great deal of anxiety around our table. Who could possibly fill those shoes? Nevertheless, we embarked on a succession plan, which we expect will take quite a bit of our time in the coming year. It is exciting to imagine whom we will find in our search.

The staggering real estate market has worked well for us, increasing our equity in the building. This will allow us to leverage that equity to do a major upgrade on our studio. We expect this will take place next summer as these things take time to plan, but the prospect of what we can do is really exciting. We will keep you posted on that.

All in all, VTDS is in good hands and holding its own in a competitive market. I am proud to continue as president for another year.



A few words from Sas

Sas Selfjord, Executive Director

In our 2015 annual report, I noted the need to rebuild pillars that support organizations, as well as the ongoing ebb and flow of planning, visioning, and building. At VTDS we are always looking forward, bringing new horizons into focus, ensuring that the road ahead is safe and leads to achieving our goals.

Although somewhat the same, this year's report contains a different perspective: rear view mirror visioning. VTDS can reflect on travel along a great deal of road in our 20-year history. This includes many milestones, but also, admittedly, some errors along the way. Like our own lives, organizations face changes and cycles,

filled with challenges, achievements, financial barriers, and uncertainty about paths not yet travelled.

In 2016, it was decided that it was time for me to step aside. The announcement of this news noted that timing – which is everything in tap – was an important part of my decision to embark on new beginnings and experiences. This is also true for VanTap, under new leadership in 2018.

Our rebuilding focus in the past year has resulted in success in areas such as reducing staffing costs, designing a program that supports greater enrolment, and generally carrying on with the philosophy, that if we all did our very best, planned the plan and were patient, we would be rewarded. We did just that, and I am proud of improved pillars of sustainability, such as work plans, board development, a human resource committee, and new policies and guidelines, all supported and driven by a talented staffing team.

As reflections of the past fade, new light will help provide insight, clarity and richness to the succession planning phase for 2017.

VanTap is in good hands with such a wonderful artistic and management team that has solidified and a board that will continue to govern skillfully.

We never know what the future holds, but I am confident it will be a bright one for VanTap.

Academy

Our artist in residence for the year, Mika Komatsu, arrived with gusto and raised the bar of excellence to inspire and lead our competitive stream to new heights. Their stellar work was developed by Lee Howard, LA – just off-stage from the Broadway sensation "Shuffle Along" - who shared his talents with us. This included showcasing the complexity of tap and entertaining audiences with his innovative choreography.

Our faculty, the cornerstone of our Academy, shaped VanTap with an innate capacity to train, mentor and lead together as a cohesive team.



TapCo

This ensemble is being supported and raised by a diverse and dedicated village of parents, techies, leaders, dancers, schools and administrators. Collectively, they enable 22 dancers to go out into the community and perform a 45 minute show, "Just in Time." Sparking the imagination of young audiences with their complex work and capacity to present as seasoned performers, TapCo is gathering momentum, and extending the scope of its reach through meeting the demands for performances from so many organizations.



Vancouver International Tap Festival



Staying true to our vision as presenters, we opened with “And Still You Must Swing,” featuring Dormeshia Sumbry Edwards, Derick Grant and Jason Samuels Smith. Adding to this rich tapestry, we shaped the second evening of performance to showcase innovative soloists who attended the festival as guest faculty. All this, against a backdrop of delivering more than 50 master classes. Our 17th annual event continued to take risks. This included new programming of the

Cholly Project, which features the essence of tap legend Cholly Atkins, and the times and culture in which he lived and created his art. This pilot project was supported by private donors, to whom we are beyond grateful. Also, special appreciation to Tim Harrison for his unwavering dedication, including grant writing for the Festival and the Cholly Project.

With support from the Summer Job Strategy program, we accessed Courtney Adams for the summer as our festival coordinator. We liked her so much, she was asked to stay on with us, part-time.

Outreach Program

With support from Gaming – and teachers Barbara Vargas and Bryn Kinders – we managed our way into a dozen schools, delivering introductory rudiments of tap, and showing youth how much fun a shuffle, flap, ball change can be. This program is also made possible by the goodwill of donors of used tap shoes. We now need to make another call to those with tap shoes collecting dust in their closets. Old tap shoes shouldn't get hung out to dry while there's a shuffle left in them. WE NEED THEM!!!



Our Building, Our Home

In its seventh decade, our well-used, well-loved building is feeling her age and will require attention in 2017-2018. We hope to pursue options that will lay new floors, get the alloy dust circulating outside with a new HVAC system, and develop a building maintenance plan to ensure we have a welcoming and cared for home for our tap community.

The VTDS Team

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Karen Gram	President
Bianca Fusco Zanatta	VP
Maria Littlejohn	Secretary
Jen Arnold	Director
Clair MacGougan	Director
Chris Roskelley	Director
Barbara Stewart	Director

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Dianne "Lady Di" Walker
Terry Brock

HONORARY MEMBERS

The Late Dr Jeni LeGon
Anna Kramer

STAFF

Sas Selfjord	Executive Director
Nat Marshik	Senior Administrator
Courtney Adams	Festival/Marketing/Social Media
Alesia DiCicco	Office Assistant
David Taylor	Bookkeeper

SUPPORT

Bruce Mason	Editor-Words that Wor
Tim Harrison	Grant writing
Michael Aihoshi	Reverie Graphics

FACULTY

Kristina Linden	Tap, Stage
Susan Nase	Adult Tap
Alesia DiCicco	Jazz Tap
Amelia Lee	Jazz
Jamie Hawke	Tap
Mika Komatsu	Artist in Residence
Gabe Richards	Hip hop
Alexis Whatley	Tap

TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Gabriela D'Almeida-Chin
Owen Flood
Raquel Francis
Bryce Millway
Miho Fujii

FUNDERS



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And a very special thanks to:

Tracy Chamzuk
Denise Clark
Paul Conner
Elesine Dantienn
Jo & Helen Furrer
Gia Holman
Yvonne Kim
Kathy & Terry Linden
Elise McGreenera

Agnes Mendoza
Nicole Oke
Teri Shaw
Mary-Anne Ryalls
TapCo parents
All our silent auction donors
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Terry Brock