

Ontario provides funding to support Theatre Orangeville's Summer Young Artist Festival

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Theatre Orangeville received nearly \$20,000 in provincial funding to support its 2026 Summer Young Artist Festival, creating opportunities for emerging performers while drawing audiences and visitors to downtown Orangeville.

The funding comes through the Province of Ontario's Experience Ontario 2026 program, and was provided by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming.

The program supports festivals and events that encourage people to explore Ontario communities, build connections and contribute to local economies.

Jennifer Stewart, artistic director of Theatre Orangeville, said programs such as the summer Young Company productions provide young people with more than performance experience.

"Programs like our summer Young Company musical and drama are about so much more than putting on a show," Stewart said. "They give young people a place to discover what they're capable of, build confidence, take creative risks and experience the incredible feeling of creating something together. Support from Experience Ontario helps us create these opportunities, while at the same time, inviting audiences to experience the remarkable talent of the next generation."

Theatre Orangeville's summer festival gives young artists the opportunity to work alongside professional theatre practitioners while developing their performance skills and gaining hands-on experience taking a production from rehearsal to the stage.

The festival first launched back in July with the Young Company's production of *Into the Woods*, which was very warmly received by audiences over the course of its weekend-long run. Families also gathered at Alexandra Park for KidsFEST, a free community event presented in partnership with the Downtown Orangeville BIA. The morning featured live entertainment, creative activities and opportunities for children and families to engage with the arts.

The festival continued through August with the Young Artists Company production of Ken Ludwig's *Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery*, a fast-paced comedic theatrical adaptation of Sherlock Holmes and his famous cases that drew very positive responses from audiences throughout its run.

Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones highlighted the role of arts and cultural programming in strengthening communities and supporting local businesses.

"Our government is proud to support local events and festivals in Dufferin County that foster community connections and support our local economy," she said. "The funding for Theatre Orangeville's Summer Young Artist Festival and Young Company programs exemplifies the significant contributions arts and culture programs make to the community, and the unforgettable experiences they create."

Theatre Orangeville says the provincial investment helps provide valuable opportunities for the next generation of artists while bringing audiences into the community and contributing to Orangeville's cultural and economic activity.