

# Tech News

Published by Communitech®

## All the world's a stage

Local theatre company working to remove barriers in the arts community

Written by: [Alex Kinsella](#) | 28 November 2019 | [Opinion](#), [Tech About Town](#)



Matt White stands outside the Conrad Centre for the Performing Arts. ( Communitech photo: Alex Kinsella )

I arrived a little early at Matter of Taste to meet Matt White from [Green Light Arts](#). Standing outside my favourite coffee shop, I ran into former 570 News anchor, now Waterloo Regional Police constable, Eric Drozd. As we were catching up, I couldn't help but notice Matt happily strolling up King Street with his typical jovial smile.

It wouldn't be far off to say that 2019 has been a great year for Matt and his wife and partner, Carin Lowerison. Earlier this month, Matt was honoured by [Arts Awards Waterloo Region](#) for his work. Then came the announcement of a new [one-year pilot project](#) between Green Light Arts and the [Kitchener Waterloo Symphony](#). Green Light Arts will be moving from [44 Gaukel](#) into the Conrad Centre for the Performing Arts. This will bring their 2019-2020 productions to the centre on King Street next to THEMUSEUM. In addition to this, Green Light Arts will serve as the official building rental management group.

"What we pitched was, first steps first, let's get in here and manage rentals. We'll take the phone calls," said White. His and Lowerison's first steps were to manage the existing rentals and requests that the symphony team

were handling. Over the next year, their goal is to start making their own calls out to other artistic groups in town. “We lead with the notion of curating that space. The symphony has done such a good job of maintaining that space, but their programming is big enough of a focus that they haven’t been able to be active in outreach to bring in other groups.”

Green Light Arts is looking for ways to remove barriers for other arts organizations here in Waterloo Region. “What are some creative ways around making it fit for different people? It’s a big space,” added White.

Going back a bit, I had met White and Lowerison back in 2016. That summer, Green Light Arts had rented out the Conrad Centre for a production. The planned production had to be scuttled due to a funder dropping out. In the short time they had before their week, White and Carin reached out to other groups and artists in town to create a week’s worth of programming for the already paid-for theatre space.

The series was called “In the Centre” and in another “KW is a small community” moment, it’s where I first met my current Communitech colleague, Anthony Ramsay. Ramsay and his brother, Aaron Francis, put on a performance on the history of sampling in hip-hop. It was the first time I learned that Kitchener-Waterloo had a hip-hop scene – and also that UW has a hip-hop dance team. (Ramsay goes by the name Ramsay Almighty and you can find his [EP on Spotify](#).)

“Things like ‘In the Centre’ are what we can make that happen more now. It positions us where more funding options are available to find those interesting things and put them on,” White said.

White and I also spoke about his win at Arts Awards Waterloo Region. I joked about whether he knew ahead of time so he could write his thank you – and wasn’t too far off. “I asked them if I could bring my kids. We turned it into a family affair because you never know when something like that will happen again,” he said. “It’s funny, I was listening to a Leafs broadcast and a former player reminded himself that he had to breathe and slow down and enjoy the moment. A lot of people say it, but it was the way he put it. So yeah, I have to enjoy this moment. We brought the kids and hung out here. It was a really fun night.”

Green Light Arts celebrated its fifth anniversary this year. It’s a milestone for any company – artistic or tech. “The award marked the first five years. The relationship with the Symphony and Conrad opens the next chapter,” White said.

The Green Light Arts team is excited about opening up opportunities for other groups in town the same way many founders who find success look to invest in up-and-coming startups.

“The creative economy needs to have a wider definition,” said White. He believes we need to recognize things like video game development as an artistic endeavour. White said even something like brewing beer can be artistic. “That’s one of the things I loved about being at 44 Gaukel – seeing how all the startups have these artistic elements.”

Green Light Arts’ first show at the Conrad Centre is a return of its popular “[A Very Leila Christmas](#)” running from Dec. 11 to 15. White and Lowerison are always looking for ways to build bridges between audiences. “That’s what I love about Leila. Izad is able to take people and make them comfortable in a space. He can take the mickey out of an otherwise sacred holiday, unpack it and then present it back to us in a joyous, non-confrontational celebration.”

White and Lowerison moved to the region from Toronto in 2014. White is a KW native, while Lowerison is from Montreal. They left the theatre community in Toronto to try and build something new here. “All things considered, to walk away from Toronto and a gig that paid for all the things we needed to pay for, but wasn’t fulfilling in the way I hoped – this is the opposite. The fulfilment is definitely here – my hope for how theatre can fit into a community is starting to gain some traction.”

# # #

Any idiot can face a crisis; it’s this day-to-day living that wears you out...I see and hear that Brooklyn-based guitarist, singer, songwriter and composer [Ava Mendoza plays the NUMUS concert series](#) at Shopify on Friday, Nov. 29 at 8 p.m. [The Good Hair Co.](#) on Victoria St presents Night Market from 7 to 10 p.m on Saturday, Nov. 30 with vendors including The Plant Market KW, Trisha Abe, Bonfire Leather and more. [The Green Room Barbers](#) at 607 King St. W. is having an opening party from 5 to 9 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 1 with tunes from Elliott and the Audio Kings and cash craft beer bar from the Princess Cafe.



## Alex Kinsella

Alex Kinsella is a content marketer and writer in Waterloo Region, Ont. He's behind TL;WR, the region's events newsletter, and has worked with some of Canada's best-known tech companies in a multitude of roles. His work has appeared in BetaKit, Grand Magazine, Community Edition and other publications.

← The evolution of tech scouting for strategic advantage

News home

Tech About Town: Communitech opens gallery wall to local artists →

 [RSS Feed](#)



Sharing is caring!



**COMMUNITECH**®

Proud member of  
Canada's Tech Network™

### The corporate stuff

- [Our story](#)
- [Communitech events](#)
- [Board of Directors](#)
- [Media and reports](#)
- [Careers](#)
- [Facilities](#)
- [Policies](#)
- [Northwatch](#)
- [Team True North](#)

### Communitech Hub

151 Charles Street West,  
Suite 100, Kitchener,  
Ontario,  
Canada, N2G 1H6

Hours: Monday - Friday  
8:30a.m. - 5p.m. ET

Phone: +1 (519) 888-9944  
Email:  
[front.desk@communitech.ca](mailto:front.desk@communitech.ca)

### Connect with us



[Get our newsletter](#)



Funded by the  
Government  
of Canada

Financé par le  
gouvernement  
du Canada

