

Canada Day in Calgary - Virtual #CanadaDay and the Virtual Canada Day Concert

The Virtual #CanadaDay Event - put on by Fort Calgary - was truly an eye-opening, engaging, and informative experience. The first part of the event that I attended was a Speaker Series hosted by Gitz Crazy Boy. In this Speaker Series, a number of Indigenous guest speakers were interviewed over a livestream about their thoughts on Canada Day. The four guest speakers were Russ Diabo, Desiree Kane, Kanahus, and Danielle Ewenin. Each individual brought their own unique perspectives to the event, and provided a picture of the history of Canada and Canada Day itself through an Indigenous lens. The second part of this event that I attended was a segment called "What are Land Acknowledgements?" In this segment, the host, Troy Patenaude, was on a livestream with three guest speakers. The three guest speakers were Dawn Saunders Dahl, Ken Favrholt, and Elder Sykes Powderface. They discussed Land Acknowledgements in detail to help people gain a better understanding of what they are and why they are important. The guest speakers also gave a brief history of their experience working with land acknowledgements. This segment taught me a lot of information that I did not previously know, and being able to hear the experiences of four different people and what they think of land acknowledgements was very engaging.

The Virtual Canada Day Concert in Calgary was a new way for Calgarians to celebrate Canada Day while following the social distancing measures that are currently in place because of COVID-19. The City of Calgary partnered with CBC Calgary to create a prerecorded concert featuring Paul Brandt, Lynn Olagundoye, T. Buckley, Chad VanGalen, and Bebe Buckskin. In between each performance there were short clips of numerous Calgary residents wishing the rest of the city a happy Canada Day. All of the artists that performed were from Calgary, and I liked that the city was taking this opportunity to support local musicians. Each one gave an amazing performance, and it was inspiring to know that I was watching a concert live with other people; even though it wasn't an in-person event, I still felt very connected to my fellow Calgarians.

Pictures of my online Canada Day experience can be found [here](#).

The live streams for the Fort Calgary events can be found [here](#).

A replay of the Virtual Canada Day Concert can be found [here](#).

Highs of the Day

The high point of my Canada Day was definitely attending the Virtual Canada Day Concert. I really enjoyed getting to listen to Calgary artists that I had not heard of before, and I liked feeling connected to other people in Calgary through watching the concert together. Since large in-person events were cancelled for this year's Canada Day because of COVID-19, I think that this concert was a fantastic way to keep people's spirits up in this difficult time.

Lows of the Day

The low point of my Canada Day was the initial adjustment to having Canada Day events that were online, and not in person which is what normally happens. Being unable to join family and friends for a big celebration was hard, and I felt a little disconnected celebrating from my home. However, I know that cancelling large events was necessary to help protect everyone from the spread of COVID-19.

Comparison with Past Years

While Fort Calgary usually does have a Canada Day celebration, this is the first time that they had it online. In past years they had a large Canada Day celebration at their location near downtown, but this year they had to improvise and coordinate the Virtual #CanadaDay celebration. They tried to make the online event as interactive as possible by livestreaming the events so that people could watch and make comments as the event was happening.

This was also the first time that CBC Calgary and the City of Calgary threw a virtual Canada Day celebration together. Like Fort Calgary, they wanted to have an event that would connect Calgarians while following social distancing measures. So even though people could not be physically together, they could still participate in an event together.

Expectations of Event vs. Actual Experience

My actual experience of Fort Calgary's Virtual #CanadaDay met my expectations for the event. Each portion of the celebration was clearly laid out before it occurred, and each part was very informative about Indigenous perspectives and history. I am very glad that I attended this event. If anything, it exceeded my expectations.

My actual experience of the Virtual Canada Day Concert did not really meet my expectations. The information page for this event made it sound like it would be a live concert, however, it was a prerecorded concert that was presented as a livestream which was much different. It felt less engaging than a live concert, since it was largely edited before premiering. Also, at the end of the concert, the audio was unsynchronized with the video and it was very hard to focus on what was happening in the video when it did not match the audio. Overall, the concert could have been improved by putting more effort into making it feel like a live Canada Day concert, and not a pre-recorded video.

Impact of COVID-19 on Canada Day

Canada Day looked very different this year because of COVID-19. All of the usual celebrations and gatherings had to be cancelled in order to properly social distance and stop the spread of COVID-19. It felt strange celebrating Canada Day from my own home and not being around my family and friends like I normally would have been. However, I am grateful that a few places planned a Canada Day event online to help people get involved and celebrate. Although I would have preferred to attend an in-person event, I know that moving events online was necessary to protect vulnerable people from COVID-19 and to help stop the spread. I enjoyed

still feeling connected to my fellow Calgarians through watching a concert over a livestream thanks to CBC Calgary and learning more about Indigenous perspectives through guest speakers thanks to Fort Calgary.