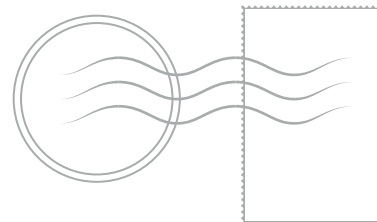


POSTCARD

Calgary



Good vibes and interactive displays make the National Music Centre a hit, finds **Natalie Marsh**

As a self-confessed country music fan, I felt a little embarrassed that I didn't realise Shania Twain was Canadian. I'm reminded of this now, reading about her influence on the country music scene at the National Music Centre at Studio Bell in Calgary, Alberta.

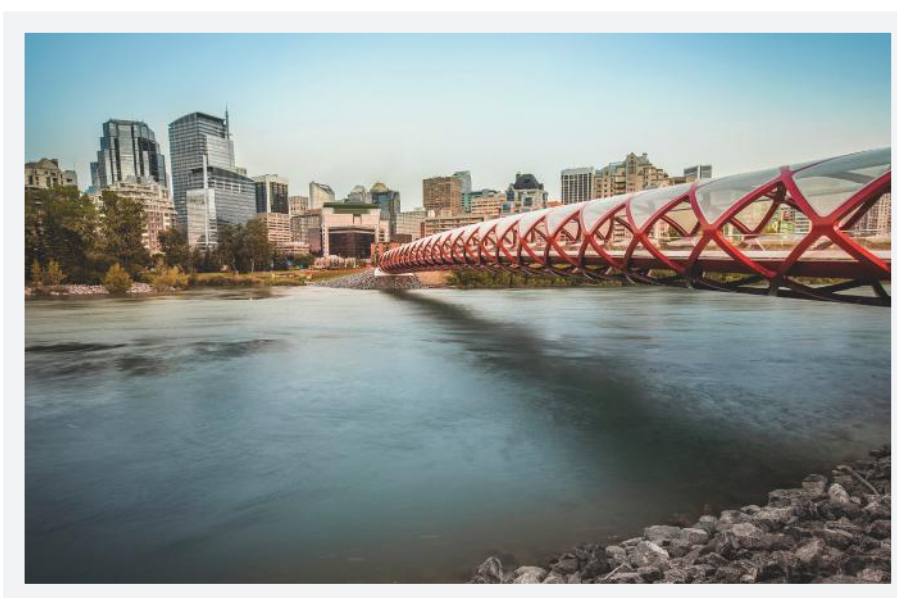
This was the part of the centre I gravitated towards first. There's just something quite 'feel-good' about country and western. I learned it was one of the first genres of music to be broadcast on the radio in Canada in the 1930s, and with names like Shania Twain tied to the genre, it's certainly not waned in popularity.

The National Music Centre opened in its Studio Bell premises in 2016, and music lovers of all tastes and interests won't have to look for very long to find an exhibit they can lose themselves in. It's also recently been announced that the centre will open seven days a week, which its president and chief executive, Andrew Mosker, described as a "huge recovery milestone".

As soon as we set foot into the lobby, we were greeted with the sound of tap dancing – a local group of young dancers putting on a performance to a small crowd, tapping out catchy rhythms with enthusiasm. But the music centre isn't all about listening and watching. There are plenty of spaces for visitors to try things out for themselves, such as vocal booths to practise their singing in, and guitars and pianos to play.

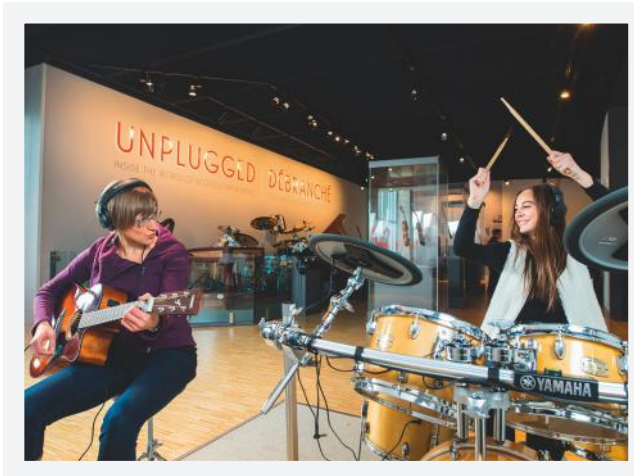
The star of the show was the Kimball Theatre Organ demonstration. These were originally built into the walls of theatres so organists could play sound effects live. Lining three walls in one of the exhibition rooms, the organ is an impressive structure, and playing it is no mean feat. Pedals, two layers of piano-like keys and tabs are played in unison, each hooked up to different instruments including cymbals and pipes, which are located in different parts of the room.

The organist played everything from the Family Guy theme tune to a soundtrack from the Super Mario Bros game series, much to my delight, leaving me with catchy tunes in my head for days. **TW**



BOOK IT

Prestige Travel offers five nights room-only at the Fairmont Palliser hotel, a Calgary city tour, admission to the National Music Centre and Calgary Tower and return flights from Heathrow with Air Canada, departing on June 8, 2024, for £1,766 per person based on two people sharing. prestigetrip.co.uk



FROM TOP: Calgary Peace Bridge; tapping out a tune at the National Music Centre

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