



Brief to the Standing Committee on Finance

August 15, 2007

Canadian Dance Assembly ~ L'Assemblée canadienne de la danse

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Executive Summary

Who we are:

The **Canadian Dance Assembly** (CDA) is the *only* federally designated national arts service organization representing professional dance in Canada to policy-makers and the public. It undertakes activities that support and address the needs of dance artists and organizations including advocacy and education, research and development, communication and information exchange, and professional development initiatives. CDA has a broad membership base of over 200 dance professionals and organizations working in many dance aesthetics and cultural expressions from across the country. CDA members include independent artists, educators, writers, researchers, consultants, presenters, companies, service organizations, and training institutions.

Our affiliations:

The CDA is a member of the Canadian Conference of the Arts and the Canadian Arts Coalition. CDA works closely with other national arts service organizations across artistic disciplines as well as with other dance service organizations on a regional and national level.

Summary of Recommendations:

In response to the government's expressed priority of taxation reform, the CDA recommends the following measures:

Recommendation 1 - To develop a plan to provide Employment Insurance benefits to all self-employed Canadians, including artists and cultural workers, responding to Canada's changing work environment.

Recommendation 2 - To respond to recommendations made by the Blue Ribbon Panel on Grants and Contributions regarding over-accountability and the availability of multi-year funding.

Recommendation 3 - To provide complete tax exemption to grants to individual artists and creators.

In addition to tax-related policy, the CDA further recommends the following measures:

Recommendation 4 – To continue increasing funding on a permanent basis to the Canada Council for the Arts with a view to bring the Council's budget to a minimum of \$300 million dollars annually by 2010.

Recommendation 5 - To reinstate funds cut from the Public Diplomacy envelope at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and to increase funds to encourage artists, arts organizations and foreign affairs staff members to build foreign audiences, diversify revenue and increase Canada's profile abroad. Artists and arts organizations play an important role in Public Diplomacy and promoting Canada's interests abroad.

Recommendation 6 – To make permanent funding for the Tomorrow Starts Today initiative, due to expire in 2009/10, to ensure the cultural sector has ongoing investment through the programs housed within this initiative.

Recommendation 1 - To develop a plan to provide Employment Insurance benefits to all self-employed Canadians, including artists and cultural workers, responding to Canada's changing work environment.

This June, Statistics Canada reported that 15.7% of the overall work force is self-employed, representing a 7% increase in less than a year (compared to a rise of 0.07% in employed workers over the same period). These stats indicate a clear shift in the profile of the Canadian work force. As such, the number of Canadians without Employment Insurance is rising at a rapid rate, and the government has yet to present a plan to address it.

All Canadians deserve access to the employment securities enjoyed by employed workers. The CDA urges the government to implement measures that will ensure greater access to Employment Insurance benefits for self-employed Canadians, including many artists, creators and cultural workers.

Recommendation 2 - To respond to recommendations made by the Blue Ribbon Panel on Grants and Contributions regarding over-accountability and the availability of multi-year funding.

Thirty-two recommendations made by the Blue Ribbon Panel on Grants and Contributions were distilled into four simple proposals:

- ✍ **Respect the recipients** – they are partners in a shared public purpose. Grant and contribution programs should be citizen-focused. The programs should be made accessible, understandable and useable.
- ✍ **Dramatically simplify the reporting and accountability regime** – it should reflect the circumstances and capacities of the recipients and the real needs of the government and Parliament.
- ✍ **Encourage innovation** – the goal of grant and contributions programs is not to eliminate errors but to achieve results, and that requires a sensible regime of risk management and performance reporting.
- ✍ **Organize information** so that it serves recipients and program managers alike.

The CDA and its members endorse these recommendations and will work with the cultural sector to develop indicators and meaningful measures of the impact of the arts in Canada.

Recommendation 3 - To provide complete tax exemption on grants to individual artists and creators.

As articulated by the Blue Ribbon Panel on Grants and Contributions, funding recipients are “partners in a shared public purpose”¹. In the cultural sector, non-profit and charitable arts organizations who facilitate the work of individual artists and creators, are acknowledged as contributors to the national heritage and cultural identity of the country. As such, these organizations benefit from tax exemption on revenues earned or granted. However, self-employed artists and creators who make equally invaluable contributions to the same shared

¹ Canada. Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. *From Red Tape to Clear Results: The Report of the Independent Blue Ribbon Panel on Grants and Contribution Programs*. December 2006. Available at www.brp-gde.ca
Canadian Dance Assembly Pre-Budget Submission August 15, 2007

public purpose do not benefit from the same tax exemption on revenues granted to carry out their work. It is therefore our recommendation to provide complete tax exemption on grants to individual artists and creators, acknowledging grant revenues as funds that support a shared public purpose.

Recommendation 4 – To continue increasing funding on a permanent basis to the Canada Council for the Arts with a view to bring the Council’s budget to a minimum of \$300 million dollars annually by 2010.

The CDA and its members view the Canada Council for the Arts as the funding agency that best understands the artistic milieu and is best equipped to respond to its evolving needs. We value the autonomy maintained by the Council at arm’s length to the government and feel that it is well positioned to set standards and show leadership among its funding partners on a federal and regional basis.

Over the last two decades, dance has experienced exploding development in the milieu, including the development of: diverse forms of practice, increased practice across regions, aboriginal arts, new voices and emerging practices. The ability of the Canada Council to respond to this growth has been stagnated by the lack of adequate funding available to the Council over many years. While we applaud the recent investment of \$50 million to the Council over two years, and the subsequent announcement of a further \$30 million annually, the lasting effect of insufficient funding compounded over many years means that a much greater and immediate investment is required to recapture lost ground.

The impact of funding decline over the last 20 years, in artistic terms, has meant that dance companies have less new repertoire, less rehearsal time, lower production values, and a startling 50% reduction in touring activity. This 50% decrease in touring activity also means that over the last 20 years, dance has become 50% less accessible to the Canadian public. We know from the experience of our members who serve on Council’s granting assessment juries that, there are still dozens of highly rated projects that are being denied financial support solely because of lack of available funding, as well as a number of excellent projects and meriting companies that are funded at inadequate levels, further marginalizing the sector.

Increasing the Council’s budget to \$300 million annually by 2010 will begin to enable the Council to fully assert its role of supporting and promoting the full scope of artistic practice, reflective of the contemporary Canadian experience.

Recommendation 5 - To reinstate funds cut from the Public Diplomacy envelope at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and to increase funds to support artists, arts organizations and foreign affairs staff members to build foreign audiences, diversify revenue and increase Canada’s profile abroad.

Canada is home to some of the world’s greatest contemporary artists and the calibre and international demand for Canadian talent is only growing. Public Diplomacy funds enable Canada to promote its image abroad. Artists and arts organizations are well positioned to promote our country as a world leader in creativity and innovation. Of particular importance to

the dance sector, the Arts Promotion Program (APP), housed within the Public Diplomacy envelope at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, is the Government of Canada's largest supporter of international tours by Canadian artists and art organizations, including dance companies such as the National Ballet of Canada, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and La La La Human Steps. It is also the *only* federal supporter of funds to producers to attend festivals. The program serves to increase global awareness of Canada and its culture by celebrating Canadian artists, boosting their international visibility and presenting Canada as contemporary, distinctive, innovative. The resulting closer economic, political and social ties in turn help to advance Canada's broader international interests.

The current demand for support through this program far exceeds its means and as a result, artists and arts organizations across the country are turning down opportunities to showcase their world-class art abroad. Dance is particularly well positioned to promote Canadian culture abroad, as the art form transcends language and cultural barriers. However, in dance, there are still entire regions of our country whose artists and arts organizations have never accessed support through this program, and therefore have never showcased their work abroad. Not only continued but *increased* funding is essential for the Department to sustain the opportunities for showcasing Canadian creativity internationally.

Recommendation 6 – To make permanent funding for the Tomorrow Starts Today initiative, due to expire in 2009/10, to ensure artists and arts organizations have access to ongoing support from the programs housed within this initiative.

Due to expire in 2009-10, the Tomorrow Starts Today (TST) Initiative houses a series of programs that together represent an interdependent web of support for the cultural sector, including the arts and dance. A full range of artistic activity in Canada forms a delicate ecology that includes many facets: training, development and creation, production, presentation, education and outreach, dissemination, and preservation. The artistic ecology is supported through a number of support mechanisms, represented in the various pieces of the TST initiative.

The National Arts Training Institutions Contribution Program supports the operation of internationally renowned training organizations such as the National Ballet School and the Dancer Transition Resource Centre.

The Canada Council for the Arts received an additional \$25 million annually for the term of the TST initiative. The Council supports the heart of the arts ecology, namely the development and creation, production, and dissemination of Canadian work.

Arts Presentation Canada supports arts presenters and festivals across Canada, ensuring that the Canadian public can experience quality works of art. Support for the presentation of dance artists and organizations is particularly important as it is the only means of distribution of this live, three-dimensional art form.

Canadian Arts and Heritage Sustainability Program supports and promotes improved management and planning practices in national arts and heritage service organizations. It also encourages such organizations to develop endowment funds by providing matching funding.

Cultural Capitals of Canada encourages municipalities across Canada to celebrate the arts.

Cultural Spaces Canada provides contributions for capital projects by arts and cultural organizations.

Trade Routes supports international market development for Canadian cultural goods and services

The renewal of these programs is integral in maintaining diverse artistic ecology to thrive in Canada, which is of great benefit to all Canadians and the social fabric of the country.