Canadian Dance Assembly
ELECTION TOOLKIT
FALL 2008

Preamble
As you review and communicate these key questions, talking points, statistics and messages, it is equally important that you personalize your engagement with political candidates in your riding. **Be prepared to animate your points and questions with your story.** What role do you or your organization play in your community? How could new investment help you to be more effective, realize new initiatives, connect to more audiences, explore new ideas, be more innovative, etc.?

**In your correspondence, remember to identify yourself as a member of the Canadian Dance Assembly.**

Background
Canadian arts workers and arts supporters are coming together to call for **enhanced federal investment in the arts.**

We are **united** in the knowledge that **greater public investment in the arts is essential to Canada’s future.** We believe that the high quality of life, for which Canada is known, depends in part on the existence of a vibrant and diverse arts and heritage community.

We regret the recent arts cuts announced by the **Government of Canada to arts funding programs** at the Departments of Foreign Affairs and Canadian Heritage. We are committed to **working with the Government** to demonstrate the value of focused, strategic and adequate investment in the cultural sector, to maximize the impact of public investment.

The cultural sector wants and needs to have a productive and constructive relationship with whatever government is elected into office. We are calling on all parties to articulate their vision, priorities and plans with respect to the cultural sector – and this point needs to be raised at all-candidates meetings; local, regional and national debates; in the media; and on the doorsteps of Canadians throughout this election campaign and beyond.

Key Messages
A thriving arts and culture sector, underpinned by adequate investment by the federal government, will place Canada at the forefront of a global society that **values innovation, excellence, social cohesion and economic prosperity.** (Support document: Canadian Dance Assembly submission to Standing Committee on Finance, August 2008)

93% of Canadians believe that the arts define Canada’s national identity  *(Source: Ipsos-Reid - Focus on the Arts 2000, Department of Canadian Heritage)*

Canadians view the arts as a centre of excellence, innovation and creative leadership in Canada and recognize that these attributes are the contemporary building blocks of an internationally competitive society.
91% of Canadians believe that cultural activities contribute to the vitality and competitiveness of our communities (Source: Ipsos-Reid - Focus on the Arts 2000, Department of Canadian Heritage)

The creative sector is an important part of the economy, and an adequate level of federal investment is necessary to keep it strong, and to ensure that Canadians have access to the work of outstanding Canadian artists.

The government of Canada can strengthen the effectiveness of its support for dance and the arts and culture sector by investing in five key, interdependent areas of activity including:
1) the development, production, promotion and dissemination of Canadian works of art (through the Canada Council for the Arts);
2) public access;
3) organizational health and sustainability;
4) physical infrastructure; and
5) training.

Questions for candidates for public office

On public investment in the arts
What is your party’s stand on federal investment in Canadian arts and culture? What specific financial commitments has your party made to arts and culture, should you form the next government?

On cultural policy
What kinds of arts and culture policies do you believe will effectively nurture Canada’s arts and culture sector? Are you prepared to work directly with the cultural sector to maximize the effectiveness of your proposed policies and investments? How will you do this?

On the role of culture on the international stage
Do you believe that arts and culture plays any kind of role in representing Canada internationally? If so, what programs and policies will your Party put in place to ensure that artists, creators and intellectuals participate in Canadian foreign policy strategy? Does your party intend to replace the programs dedicated to the internationalization of Canadian culture (PromArt and Trade Routes)? Please provide specific details.

Other
What is your personal involvement in the arts in our community?

Talking Points, Supporting Arguments and Statistics

The arts are an economic driver. In an August 2008 report entitled Valuing Culture: Measuring and Understanding Canada’s Creative Economy, The Conference Board of Canada estimated that the real value-added input by culture sector industries totaled $46 billion in 2007. Together, direct, indirect and
induced contributions bring the economic footprint of the cultural sector to $84.6 billion that year, or 7.4% of Canada’s real gross domestic product. Direct employment in 2003 was 616,000.

**The arts are efficient.** According to a recent study commissioned by the Council for Business and the Arts in Canada from McKinsey & Co., government investment in the performing arts sector earns a positive return of over 200% based on direct and indirect benefits.

According to researcher François Matarasso (in a report entitled *Use or Ornament?*), a range of studies demonstrate that *the arts innovate, challenge our perspectives, and present new ways of thinking.* They can help improve communication skills and promote creative thinking – key factors in the building of a creative entrepreneurial economy”.

**Participation in culture and the arts promotes civic engagement:** a recent report by Hill Research Strategies demonstrates that arts attendance and engagement promotes voluntarism, philanthropy, the likelihood of doing a favour for a neighbour, a sense of belong to one’s province and a sense of belonging to Canada, while at the same time reducing one’s sense of being trapped in a daily routine.

While 64% of Canadian cultural industry workers are based in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, arts organizations and artists work in every province, territory, city and community of Canada. **Increased funding for the arts reaches right across Canada.**

**Canadians are engaged in culture now more than ever before due to digital technologies,** technologies that present new opportunities for creative expression and new pathways for social interaction.