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***Canadian Actors' Equity Association is a national professional artists' association representing more than 5,500 artists working in live performance (theatre, opera and dance) in English Canada. Our membership includes performers, directors, choreographers, fight directors and stage managers.***

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## **Mission**

Canadian Actors' Equity Association (Equity) supports the creative efforts of its members by seeking to improve their working conditions and opportunities. The business of Equity is to negotiate and administer collective agreements, provide benefit plans, information and support.

Equity is committed to the principles of fairness, transparency and access. The Association strives to reflect the diversity of the community in which our members work, as well as to be representative and respectful of the evolving and diverse Canadian population.

The Association supports public policy initiatives that encourage artistic activities and stable and sustainable funding for the live performance arts.

The Association is completely self-supporting, funded solely by members' initiation fees, dues and interest on investments. The annual operating budget of the Association is approximately \$2.8 million.

## **Working for You**

Equity has two offices; a National Office in Toronto with a staff of 22, and a Western Office in Vancouver with a staff of two. The National Office oversees issues which affect the entire Equity membership and co-ordinates interaction with national and international cultural, labour and funding organizations. The membership, benefits, bonding and accounts receivable departments are located in this office. The National Office also administers day-to-day contract and agreement administration eastward from the province of Saskatchewan to the Atlantic region.

The Western Office deals with day-to-day contract and agreement administration for members working in Alberta, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories and the Yukon.

## **Democracy at Work**

Equity is a democratically structured organization run by artists for artists. The strength of the Association lies in its democratic structure and the collective commitment of its members and elected volunteers.

The governance of Equity is vested in a national Council from across Canada. Councillors are elected from each geographic region, proportional to its member population, plus representatives from the disciplines of dance, opera and stage management.

A national Council governs the affairs of Equity on behalf of the owners of Equity (its membership). Elected for a three-year term, Council's chief responsibility is to set goals for the Association, and to monitor the activities of the Association to ensure it meets those goals.

Council operates under a Policy Governance (PG) structure. It exercises its governance responsibility through the creation of detailed written rules called policies (hence: "Policy Governance"). Results are evaluated through rigorous monitoring of the Association's accomplishments.

## **What We Do**

Equity negotiates, administers and enforces scale agreements (negotiated by Equity with a producer or group of producers) and policies which govern the minimum working terms and conditions. Some of Equity's key agreements are:

### **Theatre**

- The Canadian Theatre Agreement (CTA) is negotiated between Equity and the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT). Professional theatres are signatories to the CTA by virtue of their PACT membership
- The Stratford Addendum to the CTA relates solely to engagements at The Stratford Shakespeare Festival
- The Independent Theatre Agreement (ITA) is used by professional theatres that are not members of PACT

### **Dance**

Equity negotiates agreements with the following professional ballet companies:

- The Canadian Ballet Agreement with the National Ballet of Canada (NBC)
- The Canadian Ballet Agreement with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet (RWB)
- The Alberta Ballet Agreement (ABA)

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# Who We Are - cont.

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## Opera

Equity negotiates agreements with the following professional opera companies:

- The Canadian Opera Agreement (COA) with the Canadian Opera Company
- The Vancouver Opera Agreement (VOA) with the Vancouver Opera Company
- The Opera Agreement (OPA) with Calgary Opera Association, Edmonton Opera Association, Manitoba Opera Association, Opera Ontario Inc., Opera Lyra Ottawa, Pacific Opera Victoria and Opera Atelier

The Independent Opera Producers Agreement (IOPA) applies to professional opera engagers that are not signatories to the OPA

## Federal Engagers

- Equity has negotiated a number of agreements with various federal government departments under Canada's Status of The Artist Act (e.g. the National Arts Centre Music Department Agreement and the National Capital Commission Special Events Agreement).

## Policies

Equity administers the following policies:

- The Guest Artist Policy for Equity members engaged in non- or semi-professional productions
- The Canadian Dance Policy for Equity members engaged in casual, weekly, or seasonal independent dance engagements
- The Independent Artists Project Policy (the "Indie") for Equity members engaged by artist-driven, not-for-profit theatre companies
- The Industrial Shows Policy is used for promotional productions, or productions by a corporate entity
- The Co-op Guidelines apply when Equity members produce collectively

## Member Benefits

### Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP)

Equity administers a membership RRSP plan which offers a wide range of investment options to suit a variety of retirement goals.

### Accident and Sickness Insurance

Equity's collective agreements require engagers to deduct premiums for accident and sickness insurance when members are under contract. Accident benefits are available 24 hours a day seven days a week to any member in good standing. Sickness benefits and income replacement benefits for periods of disability are available to an artist under contract when the sickness or injury occurs.

## Services

Member initiatives include *EQ*, the Association's quarterly newsmagazine, e-drive, a subscription audition and news bulletin service, and EQUITYONLINE, the Association's website.

## Advocacy

Equity's lobbying efforts focus on two distinct advocacy priorities: stable and sustainable funding for arts council and other government programs supporting the not-for-profit live performance sector, and public policy initiatives that encourage artistic activities.

## Professional Development

Equity provides financial assistance toward high-quality professional development opportunities, totalling at least \$60,000 per year.

## Members Advantage Program

Equity provides members in good standing with a comprehensive benefits package, including discounts and benefits on a range of national and local services.

## Membership in Equity

Essentially there are two ways to become an Equity member, either upon completion of an apprenticeship, or by signing an Equity engagement contract. An artist is eligible to join if offered an Equity contract as a performer, director or choreographer. Stage managers may only join Equity upon completion of an Equity apprenticeship.

**Initiation fees** are a total of \$750, with apprenticeship fees credited against the initiation fee when an apprentice completes his/her joining process.

**Basic dues** are \$135 are billed semi-annually in May and November and pay for services a member receives year-round.

**Working dues** are two percent (2%) of a member's contractual fee, and pay for contract-related services such as negotiations, contract vetting, dispute resolution, and insurance and RRSP administration.

## Reciprocal agreements

In Canada, Equity has reciprocal agreements with Union des artistes (UDA) and the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television, and Radio Artists (ACTRA) which recognize the professional standing of our respective memberships and serve to maintain industry standards such as working conditions and minimum fees. The basic principle behind each reciprocal agreement is that a member cannot be considered a professional in one jurisdiction, and a non-professional in another.

Equity also has a reciprocal agreement with the Actors' Equity Association (AEA) that provides Equity members with access to work opportunities in the United States.

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