



CULTURAL DIPLOMACY FUNDING CUTS ARE LATEST ATTACK ON THE ARTS

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Canadian Actors' Equity Association condemns the Tory Government's recent termination of key cultural diplomacy funding programs. "Given the censorship elements of Bill C-10, followed by almost zero recognition of the Canadian arts and culture sector in the 2008-09 federal budget, it is hard to interpret these cuts as anything but the latest move in an ideological attack on the arts." states Arden R. Ryshpan, Executive Director.

Quotes attributed to Kory Teneycke, the Prime Minister's press secretary, in today's Globe and Mail (" ... the [funding] choices made were inappropriate ... inappropriate because they were ideological in some cases, with highly ideological individuals exposing their agendas or [money going to] wealthy celebrities or fringe arts groups that in many cases would be at best, unrepresentative, and at worst, offensive"), confirm a deliberate attempt on the part of the government to curtail and constrain artistic endeavours which don't match political dogma.

Ryshpan continues "No matter how the Tories try to justify it, failing to continue funding a much needed \$4.7 million dollars for PromArt and another \$9 million for Trade Routes, in an already under-supported sector is unlikely to effect a significant change to Canada's balance sheet. However such cuts will ensure that homegrown opera, dance and theatre are denied a place on the world stage."

Surprisingly these cuts come on the heels of The Conference Board of Canada's August 2008 report estimating the economic contribution of Canada's culture sector has increased to 7.4% of Canada's total real GDP. The report also finds that the creative economy's importance as an engine for economic growth is growing.

Canadian Actors' Equity Association is the voice of professional artists working in live performance in English Canada. It is a national artists' association representing more than 5,500 performers, directors, choreographers, fight directors and stage managers working in theatre, opera and dance from coast to coast.

Contact: Lynn McQueen, Communications Director
416-867-9165 ext. 243 or 416-476-7037 (m), commdir@caea.com

Canadian Actors' Equity Association
44 Victoria Street, 12th floor
Toronto, ON M5C 3C4
<http://www.caea.com>