



## **Canadian Content in a Digital World** **Department of Canadian Heritage Consultations**

Dear Member,

In April 2016, the Minister of Canadian Heritage launched the first phase of a conversation on how to strengthen the creation, discovery and export of Canadian content in a digital world. The government wants to build a new model for how the federal government can best foster creativity and support Canadian culture.

The focus remains on information and entertainment content as presented in television, radio, film, digital media and platforms, video games, music, books, newspapers and magazines. That said, all creators, cultural stakeholders and citizens have a role to play in the future of the creative economy. We encourage Equity Members to be part of the conversation.

Stay tuned as Equity is preparing a submission on behalf of the Association but we also strongly encourage members, as artists, citizens and stakeholders, to help the government establish priorities.

Submit your feedback at the following link:

<http://www.canadiancontentconsultations.ca/have-your-say>

The Minister is asking three core questions. What follows are some points related to those questions that should be reinforced. Feel free to reference or add any ideas that strengthen your submission.

In particular, the consultations offer the cultural community an opportunity to advocate for the reimagined and strengthened role of the CBC in which live performance can take centre stage in the households of Canadian families.

## Questions

### 1. What does a cultural system that supports creators and respects citizen choice look like to you?

- Any digital strategy must incorporate the live performance industry.
- Canadians need to see and hear Canadian theatre, film, television, and music or we won't have a country worth celebrating. Digital technology ties vast distances and offers the opportunity to deliver exceptional live and recorded artistic content to all corners of the country.
- The Government must continue to work to make the appreciation, preservation and support of culture a given in everyday life, valued in the same way Canadians regard socialized medicine and other fundamental services.

### 2. How can we meet the challenge of promoting Canada's creativity in a digital world and how can we use Canadian content to promote a strong democracy?

- In order to use digital technology to connect Canada and the global economy, key productions at anchor organizations (e.g. The Stratford Festival, Canadian Opera Company, Citadel Theatre, Royal Winnipeg Ballet, etc.) need to be recorded in English, French and Native languages (when appropriate).
- Funds need to be made available to organizations for costs related to equipment and personnel required to create the recordings and/or live broadcast the productions mentioned above.
- The CBC needs to become a key partner as the primary platform for the dissemination of both simulcast and recorded performances to primetime audiences.
- It is important to ensure that all broadcasters (including internet-based companies) in the cultural ecosystem operate on a level playing field, are taxed accordingly and contribute to the creation of Canadian cultural content.

### 3. How do we support Canada's artists, content creators and cultural entrepreneurs in order to create a cultural ecosystem in which they thrive and that will benefit the growth of our middle class at home, and help them reach beyond our borders?

- As a major engine of job growth for the middle class the cultural sector needs sustained funding. Canada's cultural industries account for more than 600,000 jobs and generate 3 percent of Canada's GDP, or \$47.7 billion a year.
- Culture needs to be reinstated as a pillar of international diplomacy. Foreign missions need to be sufficiently resourced so that they offer a robust platform for appreciating Canadian cultural values (including democracy) abroad.
- Currently, there is insufficient funding for touring to reach international arts audiences – this can be particularly problematic for live performance where some productions have considerable touring costs (i.e. opera, ballet) associated with them.

## Background

In advance of the consultations, Equity prepared two submissions which can be found here:

1. Submission and Recommendations to the Minister of Canadian Heritage  
<http://www.caea.com/EquityWeb/NewsAndEvents/News/2016/MinistryOfCanadianHeritagePre-consultationBrief-Final.pdf>
2. Submission to House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance  
<http://www.caea.com/EquityWeb/NewsAndEvents/News/2016/2017FederalBudgetSubmission.pdf>

The result was a **pre-consultation paper** (<http://tinyurl.com/jqv52dr>) highlighting four main drivers for change stating that:

- 1. the environment is more fluid: traditional lines between “creator” and “user”, “artist” and “audience”, “professional” and “amateur”, “citizen” and “journalist”, are blurring;*
- 2. new players and intermediaries (such as Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon) have emerged, causing disruption to traditional business models and value chains;*
- 3. the world is increasingly interconnected and open, giving audiences access to an abundance of content from all over the world; and*
- 4. the digital consumption of content is affecting citizens’ expectations: hyper-connectivity (e.g., high penetration of smart phones) gives rise to different expectations, including having access to any type of digital content anytime and anywhere.*

**Feedback needs to be submitted by November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016.**

