

## TRENDS

### Work weeks

Equity's recent analysis of the previous fiscal year saw work weeks, productions and contracts holding steady from the previous year. We have seen a shift to increased ballet company representation and a change in which major theatre producers (commercial and not-for-profit) top the list of Canada's top 25 engagers.

Although most large engagers continue to report challenges with maintaining subscriptions, donations and sponsorships, they also reported excellent seasons, with most reporting a modest surplus, thanks to individual ticket sales.

### Funding

The Federal government has promised to double the funding to the Canada Council for the Arts (the largest federal arts funder) from \$180 million to \$360 million over a five year period. The Council is already in receipt of \$40 million of additional funds. It recently underwent a massive restructuring, reducing the number of grant programs from 142 to 10, which will be nationally focused and non-disciplinary. The industry is still trying to parse through the new requirements but the additional resources will help with the growing pains.

Provincial and municipal funding levels are mostly unchanged, although the newly elected government in British Columbia has promised to increase their funding to the BC Arts Council and the Ontario provincial government provided \$49 million of additional funding (out of the blue) to the Ontario Arts Council. This particular increase may be part of the usual government largesse that we often see in the lead up to an election.

## ADVOCACY, LOBBYING AND LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

### Immigration

Recent revisions to the Temporary Foreign Worker program resulted in artists working in live performance granted entrance to Canada through a revised International Mobility program. This program requires authorization from the association or union representing the discipline to provide a letter confirming that Canadian artists are similarly engaged internationally before the visa will be issued.

These changes seem to be working quite well but only apply to a subset of engagers who receive funding from the Canada Council for the Arts. Other engagers are still obligated to fulfill more challenging standards. Despite these changes, we have noticed a significant increase in the rejection of temporary visas issued to visiting artists (for attendance at film festivals and participation in theatre festivals) by Canadian authorities abroad. The visa applications are on behalf of artists who come from a small and specific group of countries, which seem to be on the list of those countries that have been identified by the U.S. (Trump) government in their attempted immigration restrictions. We can only speculate as to whether or not there is a coincidence.

## **International touring**

After losing two key government programs during a 10-year long conservative federal government regime (one that provided international touring assistance and another that supported Canadian diplomatic missions in showcasing Canadian talent abroad) the Trudeau government has committed to restoring funding and hiring key staff to support these endeavours. Equity has met with representatives from the Department of Heritage and the Department of Global Affairs to express the needs of our members in these two key areas.

## **Ontario Government “Precarious Workplace Review” - Examination of provincial labour law and the Employment Standards Act**

The government of Ontario recently undertook a significant review of legislation affecting workers, with respect to the increasing precarious nature of many employment circumstances. All the entertainment unions made representations (jointly and individually) to the Commission set up to make recommendations for changes.

Both the initial and final reports were remarkably worker-friendly and recognized that the entertainment sector is indeed unique and requires separate analysis and recommendations. We will be following up on the proposed changes to legislation which, while not specific to our sector, nonetheless may have an impact on those of our members engaged as employees.

## **Ontario Government “Cultural Policy” creation**

While we were initially greatly enthusiastic about the idea of the province creating a cultural policy, we were disappointed with the quality of the initial outreach materials and even more disappointed with the limp and lifeless result. A policy is obviously not an action plan but a meaningful policy must mandate such a plan and provide reasonable means to determine if and how the policy objectives are being met. We will be continuing to monitor the policy to see if and how it has an impact on practical decisions made by the Government.

## **North American Free Trade Agreement negotiations**

While any negative changes to NAFTA would likely have a more immediate and significant impact on colleagues in other areas of the arts and culture sector, the live performance sector is greatly concerned that the Government of Canada retain the existing cultural exemption and not provide any easements in any way.

## **BARGAINING**

Since FIANA's meeting last fall, Equity renegotiated two of its ballet agreements and one of its opera agreements. None of those negotiations were easy as all three companies are facing significant financial challenges, all for different reasons, each requiring a tailored approach to assist each company's return to financial health and stability.

- Alberta Ballet - Our voting return rate was 82.9% and 96.6% voted in support of the proposed changes.
- Royal Winnipeg Ballet - Our voting return rate was 66.7% and 75% voted in support of the proposed changes. The unusually low return rate (for a ballet company) was due to the fact that the ratification period took place after the close of the season.
- Vancouver Opera - Our voting return rate was 36.2% and 95.7% in support of the proposed changes.

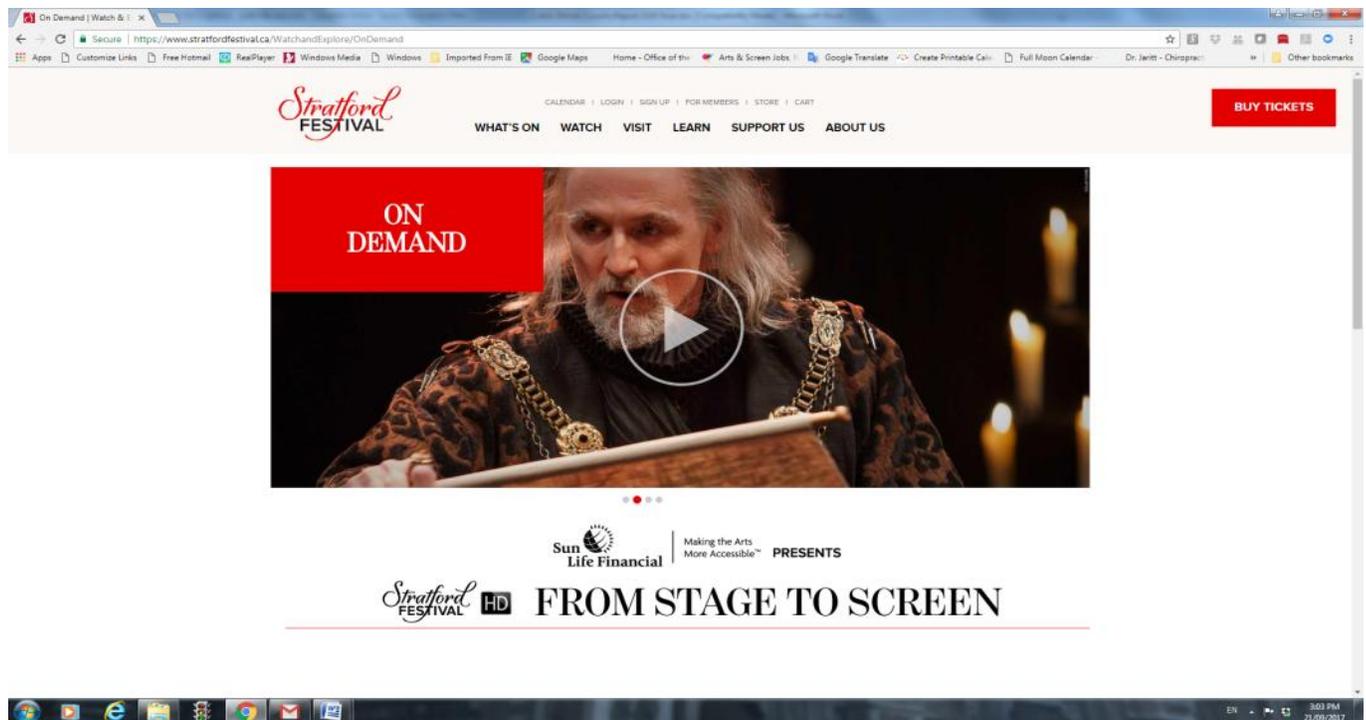
It is remarkable to see our members' commitment to finding creative solutions during negotiations. In the end – and let this be an object lesson to the engagers – treating people well, creating quality work, and providing stimulating programming choices are the best ways to ensure collaboration and cooperation when times get tough. Although it seems painfully obvious as a good business model, a deficiency in any of these elements will make weathering a financial storm much harder.

## Small-scale production

After another update (based on continued member input), we continue to see the number of contracts and work weeks under the INDIE 2.2 (designed for small companies able to pay a modest fee) more than double since 2014, and the number of productions increase by 42% in the same time period. As more and more members are creating their own work, the INDIE and our other small scale policies (the Festival and Artists' Collective policies) afford ways for members to work with the protection of a contract, and under terms and conditions acceptable to Equity.

## Agreements for the recording of theatrical productions

Shakespeare productions by the Stratford Festival under our tripartite arrangement with ACTRA continue to be filmed every season. The Festival intends to film all of Shakespeare's plays over the next number of years and the tripartite arrangement now forms part of our collective agreement with the Festival. Once they have been screened in movie theatres and broadcast internationally, the films are made available for free for viewing. You can see them at <https://www.stratfordfestival.ca/WatchandExplore/OnDemand>



The arrangement we concluded with Canada's third largest repertory company, to produce plays, concerts and other activities for audio broadcast has been a great success and the performers have received three figure royalty cheques.

Increasingly, companies, such as the National Ballet of Canada, are finding ways to expand their audiences through the use of the internet. World Ballet Day on October 5th, now in its third year, has attracted over 500,000 viewers to its 22 hour stream of ballet class and rehearsal from 5 of the best ballet companies in the world, including the Bolshoi, the Australian Ballet, the Royal, the San Francisco Ballet and, of course, the National Ballet of Canada.

## **INTERNAL NEWS**

### **President Resignation**

At its recent meeting, Equity's national Council accepted Allan Teichman's resignation as Council President.

Allan's resignation did not come as a surprise, and was something he had promised to do when re-elected President at the beginning of the term. He also announced his plan to step down as part of his report to the membership at Equity's last National Annual General Meeting.

Allan will formally step down as Council President at the next in-person meeting on October 29, 2017 and Council will choose a new Council President that same day. When I know the name of the new president, we will circulate a notice to all our colleagues.

### **Diversity efforts and The Equity Census**

Equity Council is currently considering ways in which it can increase and ensure greater representation for members from racialized communities, members with disabilities, members who do not have a binary gender identification or are members of the LGBTQ community. While 33% of Equity's current Council come from racialized communities and several openly identify with the LGBTQ community, the current Council is looking for ways within their electoral process to expand representation. A commitment to diversity cannot only apply to the workplace but must also manifest itself in appropriate internal policies.

We have done further analyses of the data we collected during The Census and are now able to compare census data against our internal database and compare earnings across several factors.

### **Upcoming Council projects**

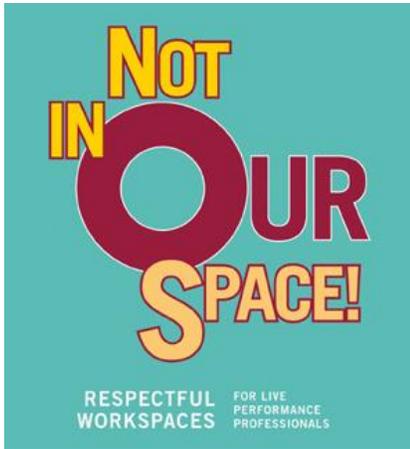
Equity is now pursuing two additional large scale projects on behalf of the members; one will look at mental health issues in our membership and the other will examine the needs of senior artists with a view to ensuring that they may continue to practice their craft even if they have retired from a professional career.

### **Campaigns**

We recently undertook our first-ever comprehensive provincial election outreach campaign for members. Usually we apply our limited staff resources to federal (national) campaigns only. This regional direct-to-member outreach included meetings in the province with key candidates and bureaucrats, a member survey ranking issues of importance, published survey results, detailed campaign platform analysis, direct-to-member weekly election email updates, in-depth results analysis (This was a most interesting phase as the election result was so close it took several weeks to determine a victor resulting from a coalition government.) Given the staff time invested, a 10% uptake on the campaign was disappointing. However, members who did avail themselves of our subscription service were very appreciative and complementary. Ontario, our most populous province where almost 60% of all Equity members reside, will hold a provincial election next year. Learning from our first foray into direct-to-members communications like this, it will be interesting to see how we improve member involvement in future.

An overview of our Not in OUR Space! and Dance Equity campaigns follow in this report. I look forward to answering any questions you may have about our two newest outreach projects and we will have associated materials with us at the meeting.

## Not In OUR Space! Anti-harassment campaign



Nearly two years ago, we reported undertaking a major survey of our membership about workplace safety and harassment. Approximately 20% of the membership (1,043 members out of a total of approximately 5,700 in good standing) responded to the survey. Almost 50% of female respondents reported being the target of some kind of toxic workplace behaviour as did 37% of the male respondents.

As a result of this survey, Equity's Council instructed a committee to review the Association's bylaws and tasked the staff to develop new, updated and more user-friendly anti-harassment materials.

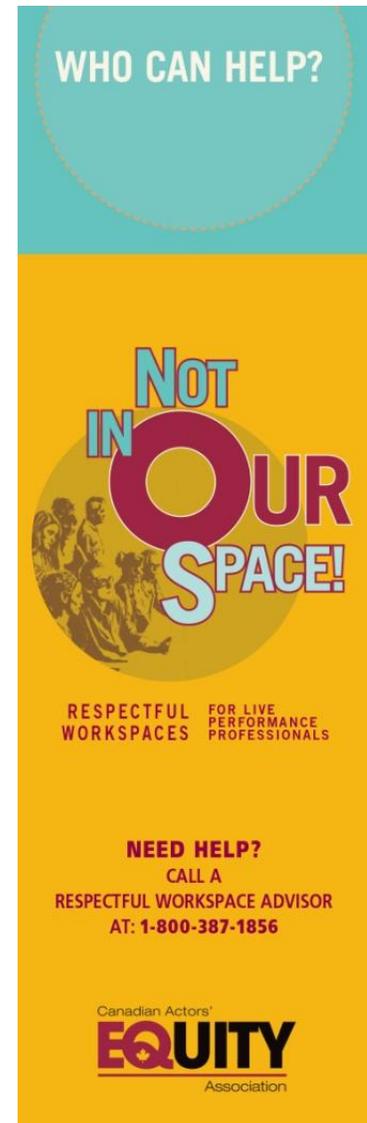
The result of this work is the Not In OUR Space! campaign. Equity's largest bargaining partner, PACT (theatre), is working with us to ensure that the new materials get into all their theatres across the country. The materials consist of a poster, with pockets for bookmarks containing key information about what constitutes harassment, what can be done about it and who to contact. Further, a new brochure advises members what their various options are as a response to workplace bullying and harassment, and we have also created an entirely new and more robust safe and respectful workplace policy.

As part of the initiative, all staff members have received basic training on how to manage calls about harassment when someone contacts our offices and several staff have been designated as "Respectful Workplace Advisors" (RWAs). The RWAs have received comprehensive advanced training in assisting members with concerns or complaints.

A key element of this anti-harassment campaign is the delivery of a joint statement by a member of the senior theatre management team and an Equity representative on the first day of rehearsal. The statement reiterates the theatre's commitment to providing a safe and respectful workplace and informs our members who they may report problems to and what is the theatre's internal complaint procedure. This idea was tested out in selected theatres across the country over the summer, allowing Equity and PACT to refine messaging before undertaking a national campaign. The campaign roll-out is already underway and will be distributed to all non-PACT theatres (including opera and dance engagers) later on in the fall.

Copies of the materials are available on our website at:

<http://bit.ly/2mBzxJs> or you may see them at the meeting in Zagreb. Copies of the latest issue of our *EQ* magazine review the campaign in depth and may be found here: <http://bit.ly/2fvkvGx>. Some hard copies will be available at the meeting in Zagreb.



## Dance Equity outreach project

Equity initiated a project last year to reach out to dancers not represented by an association but whose work increasingly requires appropriate working terms and conditions. We hired a well-known member of the urban dance community to spearhead what was to become the Dance Equity rights awareness campaign. His knowledge of what the sector needed along with extensive relationships in the community, have resulted in a comprehensive new campaign including new joining criteria for independent dancers (none existed before), new standardized conditions for urban dance battles and judging, and a new policy for the engagement of dancers in other types of dance.

As part of this initiative, Equity's Council is offering regular membership to *bona fide* professional dancers for a \$10 initiation fee (reduced from \$1,000). This special offer is open to eligible dance artists seeking respectful working conditions for a 12-month period (ending August 17, 2018). An opportunity to join Equity will allow independent dancers access to membership for the first time. To make interaction as easy as possible we created an online membership eligibility application at <http://bit.ly/2w5LXRM>

At the centre of the campaign is the **OPEN**, a short duration and multi-engagement dance policy designed to support the engagement of Equity members working in a diverse range of practices for short-duration performances and activities. Artists may also self-engage. The **OPEN** invites non-traditional dance artists to work under professional protections within competitive, freestyle, multidisciplinary, social, commercial, cultural and other diverse dance forms in not-for-profit or commercial activities, and provides for both individual and group engagements. Short-form agreements for Judging and Competition activities are also included.

The **OPEN** offers the same protections and supports that members already rely upon while taking a new approach to the calculation of minimum fees based on the duration of a performance piece, the number of artists performing in each piece, the number of performance pieces in a presentation and the number of times the performance piece(s) is presented. A multi-booking incentive for engagers planning additional presentations also applies.

A satellite website, dedicated to dancers, has been created as part of the campaign (screen shots below). Materials, including specially created videos, may be viewed at <http://danceequity.com/>.

