Canada’s culture sector provides work to over 660,000 Canadians and contributes $53 billion GDP annually. Artists produce the raw materials that kick the creative value chain in motion. While an important economic driver, culture also reflects and connects us, promoting belonging among citizens. Locally, arts and culture animates communities, making them attractive places to live, work and play. Canadian Actors’ Equity Association (Equity) members are proud of their creative contributions through live performance to Canadians’ quality of life and culture.

The Government of Canada plays a critical leadership role in a healthy creative sector. Its support leverages public and private engagement, while safeguarding these economic, social and cultural rewards for the people of Canada.

Canadians are leaders on the international stage too; artists and cultural workers are no exception. Artists represent, reflect, embody and evoke the cultural fabric of the nation across diverse aesthetic sensibilities. Artists must continually adapt and evolve as the Canadian public’s demands change, as new distribution systems disrupt old models, and as cultural contexts are better understood, modified, integrated, and celebrated. We should all be reflected on Canadian stages, screens and airwaves.

In an increasingly connected world where our distinctively diverse and tolerant Canadian culture risks being drowned out by louder voices to the south, east and west, it is imperative that we strengthen and adapt our own cultural infrastructure to ensure Canadians are heard, seen and read, here and abroad.

Now, more than ever, Canadian Content Matters!

Yours truly,

CANADIAN ACTORS’ EQUITY ASSOCIATION

Arden R. Ryshpan  Scott Bellis
Executive Director  Council President

Canadian Actors’ Equity Association is the voice of professional artists working in live performance in English Canada. We are a national artists’ association representing more than 5,800 members working in theatre, opera and dance from coast-to-coast-to-coast. Our membership includes performers, directors, choreographers, fight directors and stage managers. 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 and act as an advocate for its membership.
We offer the following recommendations for consideration during the 2019 federal election.

1. Investments in the Canada Council for the Arts improve artistic and cultural engagement opportunities for Canadians in every province and territory including Indigenous peoples, official language minority communities, and equity-seeking groups: women and gender minorities, people of colour, persons with disabilities, and LGBTQ2S communities. We encourage the Government of Canada to implement the planned $35M increment to the Canada Council’s budget in 2020-2021, and thereafter to maintain its new base funding level of $362M in 2020-2021 through 2024-2025. Stable support is crucial due to the often lengthy lead up time for artistic works to come to fruition.
   • Canadians gain access to art that is locally and culturally relevant when we invest in artists wherever they live and however they identify. As a public arts funder, the Canada Council has an entire country to serve; equitable processes and outcomes are imperative. If the Canada Council democratizes arts funding, then pay equity in the arts will improve too.
   • An independent consultation process with the arts community in every region with key stakeholders is essential to evaluate and improve upon the new funding model's impact.

2. Protecting Canadian cultural expressions is in step with our national interests. Foreign players must follow domestic rules, including online programming services. These issues have been studied at length by the CRTC, Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Canadian Heritage, and NGOs. The answers are clear:
   • Canadian content should be front and centre. To do business in Canada, online streaming services need to comply with Canadian content rules, and contribution requirements.
   • Canada should join its European Union counterparts and require transnational players (e.g., Facebook, Amazon, Apple, Netflix, Google) to collect and remit taxes. This position must be upheld during WTO negotiations on e-commerce. If implemented, Canadian jurisdictions will benefit from income and progressive tax revenues from foreign players who already profit from Canadian content and Canadian audiences.
   • Revenues should be re-invested in culture, including live performance production and capture.

3. A strong and effective Canadian media supports the discoverability of Canadian content.
   • Local coverage, including print, of news, arts, culture, and sports, lets Canadians know what's going on in their own backyard so they can discover Canadian talent. If you don't know what's on, you don't go. Independent mechanisms to support independent journalism are needed.
   • The CBC plays a pivotal role bringing local news, as well as Canadian arts, culture, and sports, to living rooms across the nation. Stable and increasing support for the CBC is essential.

4. Update existing cultural infrastructure to maximize output: triple the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund.
   • Canadian content can move from stage to screen to sofa by equipping key performance spaces across Canada with digital capture technology, making content available to wider Canadian and global audiences across platforms (broadcast, streaming, and virtual reality).
   • Workplace safety and accessibility standards should protect arts workers too. While front of house areas in theatres are retrofitted accordingly, meeting accessibility standards for stages and backstage areas would improve workplace safety, and support a safer work culture, for all.
   • Dedicated streams within a better resourced Cultural Spaces Fund can support these goals.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:
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DID YOU KNOW

- 95% of Canadians believe that arts and cultural activities in a community make it a better place to live\(^1\) and that arts experiences are a valuable way of bringing together people from different languages and cultural traditions\(^2\).

- More than eight in ten (87%) Canadians attended performances and arts events in the past year\(^3\).

- Arts have been shown to empower youth, especially at-risk youth\(^4\), to succeed in school, in work and in later life\(^5\). Canadians are cognizant of the role of arts in education: 85% believe that arts education assists in the emotional and intellectual development of children and consider it is a good reason to support the arts\(^6\).

- The GDP of Culture in Canada is larger than the value added of agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting combined ($31 billion), accommodation and food services ($41 billion), and utilities ($43 billion)\(^7\).

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\(^1\) Environics Research, *Arts and Heritage Access and Availability survey 2016-2017*, 2017. Including 62% who strongly agree and 33% who somewhat agree. Agreement is strong even among people who do not attend the arts: 39% strongly agree and 44% somewhat agree.

\(^2\) Environics Research, *Arts and Heritage Access and Availability survey 2016-2017*, 2017. The arts can be a real vector of inclusion for immigrants. Foreign-born Canadians are particularly likely to strongly agree that they are a valuable way of bringing people together (71%, vs 60% among Canadian-born).


\(^4\) National Endowment for the Arts, *The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth: Findings from Four Longitudinal Studies*, 2012.

