

ProArt Alliance

The Professional Arts Alliance
of Greater Victoria

BRIEF to the:

Legislative Assembly of British Columbia
Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services

Presented for the ProArt Alliance
by Ivan Habel, General Manager, Belfry Theatre
and Peter Sandmark, Executive Director, MediaNet

info@proartalliance.ca www.proartalliance.ca

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Victoria

"Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits."

- Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights -

Executive Summary

The ProArt Alliance is an alliance of 17 professional arts organizations in the Greater Victoria region whose goals are to advance the important role the arts play in the life of the community, and to advocate for public sector support. We believe that a strong arts culture contributes to liveable and vibrant communities.

The arts and culture sector is a major contributor to the local economy, as shown in the recent study, “The Greater Victoria Arts-Culture Sector Economic Activity Study”, prepared By Dr. Brock Smith of the University of Victoria for the ProArt Alliance and four other organizations (the Victoria Foundation, the CRD Arts Development Service, the Greater Victoria Development Agency and Tourism Victoria). The study concluded that, in 2010, in the broad Greater Victoria region, the arts and culture sector contributed \$170 million to the area’s gross domestic product and contributed \$21 million in property taxes. This translates into an estimated 5,440 jobs in the region.

“This study shows that the arts and culture sector is a significant contributor to our local economy,” said CRD Arts Committee chair Vicki Sanders. “It underlines how important the arts are in building our communities and in contributing to a quality of life that makes the capital region a great place to live.”

At a time when economic recovery and employment are at the forefront of local, provincial and national strategies, these figures speak volumes about the importance and necessity of investing in the arts - not only for our quality of life, but for our ability to thrive economically. The study clearly demonstrates that the arts create jobs!

To help ensure a vibrant arts and culture sector, the ProArt Alliance recommends:

- 1) BC Arts Council
 - i) Increase the BC Arts Council funding to \$32 Million
 - ii) Ensure an arms –length relationship with government

iii) Provide multi-year operating grants for arts organizations to ensure stability.

2) Gaming

i) Honour the original Memorandum of Understanding and restore Gaming funding as per that agreement.

ii) Restore the criteria allowing adults arts programming to be funded.

3) Capital/infrastructure program

Create a capital program for arts and cultural organizations so that they can own their facilities and venues.

ProArt presentation to Standing Committee on Finance:

We are here on behalf of our 17 ProArt member organizations located in the Greater Victoria region:

Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Ballet Victoria, Belfry Theatre, Blue Bridge Theatre, Cinevic, Intrepid Theatre, Kaleidoscope, MediaNet, Open Space, The Other Guys Theatre, Pacific Opera Victoria, Story Theatre, Theatre SKAM, Victoria Film Festival, Victoria Conservatory of Music, Victoria Jazz Society, and the Victoria Symphony.

We represent the professional arts organizations in Victoria, and will speak about the positive contribution that the arts provide our city, as well as how the arts benefit all parts of BC society.

Economic impact

The recently released economic impact report, "The 2010 Greater Victoria Arts-Culture Sector Economic Activity Study", conducted by Dr. Brock Smith from the Peter B. Gustavson School of Business at the University of Victoria, shows what many of us already knew, that the arts and culture sector is a significant contributor to the general economy, as well as being an important source of jobs. The total economic activity generated by the Greater Victoria arts and culture sector is \$170 million and is equal to one fifth of the economic activity generated by tourism in the same region. This amount of economic activity contributed \$21 million in property taxes, and provides an estimated 5,440 jobs in the region.

The study is based on a conservative extrapolation and still demonstrates the important contribution the arts make to the general economy in indirect and induced spending. In short government investment in the arts is more than returned by tax revenues generated and the sector is responsible for creating an important number of jobs. These economic benefits, as we've said, create jobs and result in tax revenue, but they are only a small part of the benefits that the arts bring to our communities, including social benefits on many levels, educational benefits for schoolchildren, health benefits for senior citizens, and a strong influence on the attractiveness of our cities as destinations for the creative industries that will be central to tomorrow's economy. For all of these reasons, the arts are one of the best investments that can be made by the Province of British Columbia.

ProArt Recommendations:

1) BC ARTS COUNCIL:

- i) We urge the provincial government to increase the BC Arts Council's funding to \$32 million, effectively doubling its budget. We believe that the BC Arts Council is the best stable source of direct, on-going, long-term sustained core funding for arts organizations, museums, performing arts companies, and community arts councils on behalf of the government and people of British Columbia. What the arts and culture community needs is dependable, dedicated, multi-year, secure core funding so that arts groups can plan prudently and effectively over the long term. Stable core funding ensures sustainable arts organizations that contribute

positively to the economic and social well being of the community. What we have seen from the economic impact study is that the grants serve like seed money, creating enormous spin-off benefits.

ii) We recommend that the provincial government maintain an arms-length relationship with the BC Arts Council, through the Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development, to ensure that decisions to provide funds are based on artistic excellence, needs and the strategic goals of the BC Arts Council.

iii) We recommend that the BC Arts Council begin offering multi-year grants to arts organizations to develop stability for the arts infrastructure. The uncertainty of the recent government cuts to the arts has shaken the arts and culture community. What is needed is stable funding and a renewed vision and plan for arts and culture, including heritage. The uncertainty and instability caused by the swings in BC Arts Council and Gaming funding have made it almost impossible for arts organizations to plan forward or to meet their mandates.

2) GAMING FUNDING FOR THE ARTS:

i) We urge the government to honour the original Memorandum of Agreement on Gaming Policy (“Memorandum of Agreement on Gaming Policy, June 17, 1999, between the B.C. Association for Charitable Gaming, BCACG and The Government of British Columbia”), wherein the Province committed to a guarantee of 1/3 of government net community casino gaming revenue, indexed to inflation. We believe that funding to non-profit and charitable organizations should be at least 20% of net Gaming proceeds.

ii) Most importantly we urge the government to restore funding for adult arts programs. Since arts programs for adults were made ineligible in the Gaming grant criteria, many arts organizations have lost funding, which has resulted in lost jobs, and less arts programming for the general public. In fact,

strengthening the infrastructure of arts organizations allows them to present more and better programs for youth.

3) Capital Infrastructure Program

We recommend the creation of a capital program for arts and culture organizations so that they can own their facilities and venues.

A report prepared in 2007 for the Ministry of Tourism, Sport, and the Arts by Vis-à-vis Management, “A Case For Investing in Arts, Culture and Heritage Infrastructure”, concluded that there is a serious shortage of arts and heritage infrastructure in the province and what does exist needs to be upgraded. The report stated that BC spent \$123.8-million over the past thirty years on Arts, Cultural, and Heritage [ACH] infrastructure. This works out to a little less than \$4.2-million per year. The report also pointed out that Alberta had announced \$280-million over two years for cultural, sport, and recreation infrastructure; Saskatchewan has a 3-year, \$100-million program for the same purpose; and Ontario had partnered with the federal government to spend \$600-million from 2008-2011.

APPENDIX 1

The Professional Arts Alliance of Greater Victoria is an association of 17 professional arts organizations in the Greater Victoria area, including:

Art Gallery of Greater Victoria

The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria is a public art museum dedicated to the celebration of art. When it first opened in 1951, the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria exhibited art in the historic 1889 mansion that is now adjacent to its seven modern galleries. With almost 17,000 works of art, the Art Gallery has the largest public collection in BC and is a vibrant and active part of Victoria's artist community.

www.aggv.bc.ca

Ballet Victoria

Ballet Victoria is proud to bring you ballet productions from classical masterpieces, to new and innovative works created by our Artistic Director Paul Destrooper.

www.balletvictoria.ca

Belfry Theatre

As a professional adult theatre company, we are dedicated to producing contemporary plays, with an emphasis on Canadian work, and to promoting artistic, cultural, and educational events in the Greater Victoria Region. In the past 30 years the Belfry has produced 230 plays, including 158 Canadian plays, and more than 33 premieres. Many of those premiere productions have gone on to acclaim across Canada, in the U.S., Australia, Europe and London's West End. Belfry productions regularly tour to other cities and have won awards in Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary.

www.belfry.bc.ca

Blue Bridge Repertory Theatre

Established in 2008, the Blue Bridge Repertory Theatre is the newest professional theatre company in Victoria, providing fresh classics from the past while utilizing a connection between established artists from across Canada and young and emerging artists in all areas of theatre. Their first season in 2009 presented three plays to more than 10,000 spectators and since then their numbers have been steadily growing.

<http://bluebridgetheatre.ca>

Cinevic

Cinevic is an artist run cooperative facilitating the expression of unique, innovative voices in the ever-evolving language of film. They've just celebrated their 20th anniversary.

www.cinevic.ca

Intrepid Theatre

Intrepid Theatre produces the annual **Victoria Fringe Theatre Festival**, **Uno Fest: Canada's Singular Live Theatre Event**, and a year-round series of international theatre presentations and premieres for local indie companies. Intrepid also created the Metro Studio and Intrepid Theatre

Club – two small downtown Victoria venues that are home to festivals and presentations, and are available for rental by local and touring artists and companies.

www.intrepidtheatre.com

Kaleidoscope

Kaleidoscope Theatre's mission is to create original, innovative and relevant theatre experiences that stimulate and inspire young people and their communities.

www.kaleidoscope.bc.ca

MediaNet

The purpose of MediaNet is to support and facilitate the creative use of the medium of video/film as a form of communication and personal expression. This year is MediaNet's 30th anniversary!

www.media-net.bc.ca

Open Space Art Society

Founded in 1972, Open Space supports experimental artistic practices *in all contemporary arts* disciplines, acting as a laboratory for engaging art, artists and audiences. As an exhibition and performance centre, Open Space reflects the wide diversity of contemporary art practices in Victoria, across Canada and beyond. They are one of Canada's oldest artist-run centres.

www.openspace.ca

The Other Guys Theatre

The Other Guys Theatre Company is committed to developing theatrical presentations reflecting the history and culture of our community while supporting the livelihoods of local professional and emerging artists.

www.otherguystheatre.ca

Pacific Opera Victoria

Founded in 1980, Pacific Opera Victoria (POV) has earned a reputation as one of Canada's leading opera companies. They are noted for their commitment to a diverse repertoire, original productions, and a dedication to Canadian artists.

www.pov.bc.ca

Story Theatre

Story Theatre Company creates productions for young people using traditional narrative material as its base. They have performed material in schools and communities across Canada since 1981 that is fun to watch, and at the same time enhances the curriculum in the areas of Language Arts, Music and Citizenship, and have earned a reputation of excellence in theatre for young audiences.

www.storytheatre.ca

Theatre SKAM

Founded in 1995, Theatre SKAM's mandate is to create a living, contemporary, professional theatre, and to provide varied and provocative theatrical entertainment for audiences in Victoria and on tour; employing emerging theatre artists.

www.skam.ca

Victoria Film Festival

The Festival's vision is to establish an annual independent film event in Victoria with a worldwide reputation, but anchored in the local community. They offer high quality films, activities and events, encourage artistic innovation and creativity, and are committed to cooperation and collaboration with other arts organizations, as well as the business community.

www.victoriafilmfestival.com

Victoria Conservatory of Music

The VCM is home to two fine performance halls, and proudly presents diverse and vibrant public performances ranging from classical to popular, early music to opera, and solo performances to theatre that the whole community can experience.

www.vcm.bc.ca

Victoria Jazz Society

The Victoria Jazz Society was founded in 1981. They produce two major music festivals every summer, the Victoria International JazzFest, and the Vancouver Island Blues Bash, as well as a series of concerts from September to May every year.

www.jazzvictoria.ca

Victoria Symphony

In its 70th year of operation, the Victoria Symphony is Vancouver Island's largest and most active performing arts organization, and is heard by 125,000 people annually. With nearly 70 performances in its season, plus performances for Pacific Opera Victoria and Dance Victoria, the Victoria Symphony continues to inspire the community with high-quality concerts in seven diverse series, as well as with its outstanding education and outreach programs.

www.victoriasymphony.ca

APPENDIX 2

On May 4th, 2011, Statistics Canada released figures comparing provincial spending on culture on a per capita basis. Despite having the 4th largest provincial economy in Canada, BC ranks last in per capita spending on culture. For 2008-2009 provincial spending was as follows:

<i>Province</i>	<i>Amount/Per Capita</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Newfoundland and Labrador	\$139	1
Saskatchewan	\$132	2
Prince Edward Island	\$123	3
Quebec	\$121	4
Manitoba	\$116	5
New Brunswick	\$106	6
Alberta	\$104	7
Nova Scotia	\$ 98	8
Ontario	\$ 69	9
British Columbia	\$ 62*	

*note that this is before the most recent cuts to the arts in BC.