

# 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  
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and Patrick Corrigan, Pacific Opera of Victoria Executive Director,  
October 18, 2012, Victoria

## GREATER VICTORIA ARTS & CULTURE SECTOR

\$5.4 million\* in funding turns into

# \$169 million!

NET ECONOMIC IMPACT (GDP)

## \$1 leverages \$31

QUALITY OF LIFE  
**JOBS**  
TAX REVENUE

TOTAL  
NET PROPERTY TAX IMPACT  
IN GREATER VICTORIA =  
**\$20,979,723**  
AND **5400 JOBS\*\***

\* 2012 Vital Signs Report, Victoria Foundation. \*\*Greater Victoria Arts Sector: Total Economic Activity data from the "2010 Greater Victoria Arts and Culture Sector Economic Activity Study" by R. Brock Smith from the University of Victoria.

*"I believe the arts and culture community is important to the social and economic health of the province. It is time to put an end to the yo-yo effect on funding and realize the positive impact of arts and culture in British Columbia, from our youngest resident to the oldest."* Christy Clark,  
Jan 30, 2011 (in response to questions from Arts Advocacy BC)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.artsadvocacybc.ca/category/arms-length/>

## **ProArt presentation to Standing Committee on Finance**

We are here on behalf of our 20 ProArt member organizations located in the Greater Victoria region: Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Ballet Victoria, Belfry Theatre, Blue Bridge Theatre, Cinevic, Dance Victoria, Intrepid Theatre, Kaleidoscope, MediaNet, Open Space, The Other Guys Theatre, Pacific Opera Victoria, Puente Theatre, Story Theatre, Theatre Inconnu, 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 believe strongly in the positive contribution that the arts make to our society, and that funding for the arts is one of the best investments that the Province of British Columbia can make.

### **Arts funding leverages other funds**

The funding that the government invests in arts and culture leverages other funding and self-generated revenues. Increasing the province's investment in the arts will produce significant economic and social returns. According to the Victoria Foundation's 2012 *Vital Signs* report, the three levels of government, municipal, provincial and federal, all together invested approximately \$5.4 million into arts organizations in the Greater Victoria region in 2010. According to the *2010 Greater Victoria Arts and Culture Sector Economic Activity Study* by R. Brock Smith from the University of Victoria, the total Net Income Impact (in terms of GDP) on the Greater Victoria area was over \$169,000,000, generating over \$20 million in property tax. The arts funding thus resulted in a much larger economic impact, such that \$1 in arts funding created \$31 of economic impact.

### **Culture creates jobs**

The *2010 Greater Victoria Arts and Culture Sector Economic Activity Study* suggests that overall economic activity supported the equivalent of more than 5400 person years of employment,<sup>2</sup> and is based on a conservative extrapolation. It demonstrates the important contribution that the arts make to the general economy in indirect spending, as well as the effect of induced spending. In short, government investment in the arts is more than returned by tax revenues generated. The sector is responsible for creating an important number of jobs, and exerts a strong influence on the attractiveness of our cities as destinations for the creative industries that will be central to tomorrow's economy.

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<sup>2</sup> 2010 *Greater Victoria Arts and Culture Sector Economic Activity Study*, Dr. Brock Smith, page 2

A 2010 study from England, *Bigger thinking for smaller cities: How arts and culture can tackle economic, social and democratic engagement challenges in smaller cities* stated that "... a network of arts and culture projects in smaller cities can be used to maximize economic, social and democratic returns."<sup>3</sup>

*More than quality of life*, a report developed the Canadian Creative City Network, argues that "arts, culture and heritage are viewed not only as amenities to improve the quality of life, but as a foundation upon which the future of these rural/small communities rests. The arts and creative activities can profoundly affect the ability of a town not only to survive over time, but to thrive."<sup>4</sup>

### **Creative cities attract companies**

*"The arts inspire innovation by leading us to open our minds and think in new ways about our lives - including the work we do, the way we work, and the customers we serve."*

W. James McNerney, Jr., Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer, The Boeing Company.

The economic impact report, *2010 Greater Victoria Arts and Culture Sector Economic Activity Study*, showed that the arts and culture sector, as well as being an important source of jobs, is a significant contributor to the general economy, and also enhances the quality of life in the region. If we want BC to attract international investment in creative business – especially high-tech – investors should see that BC communities are attractive places to live for the highly talented work forces they need. The arts contribute to quality of life, making our cities attractive places to live. In addition to the economic benefits of the cultural sector, the arts also bring other benefits to our communities, including social benefits on many levels, educational benefits for schoolchildren, and health benefits for senior citizens<sup>5</sup>.

### **Arts and culture enrich the quality of life**

Arts and culture are essential elements of our communities, making them better places to live. The arts benefit our health, and our economy, contributing to human understanding, social progress and cognitive development. The Ontario Arts Council commissioned a study, *The Arts and the Quality of Life*, and Kathryn Townshend, OAC's Director of Research, Policy and Evaluation summarized the study's findings: "The findings show that a large majority of

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<sup>3</sup> A discussion paper from *Regional Cities East, England*, September 2010  
[http://www.rce.org.uk/assets/Docs/Website%20January%202011/6751\\_RCE\\_BiggerThinking\\_LR.pdf](http://www.rce.org.uk/assets/Docs/Website%20January%202011/6751_RCE_BiggerThinking_LR.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> *Developing and Revitalizing Rural Communities through Arts and Culture*  
<http://creativecity.ca/publications.php>

<sup>5</sup> *Those who attend and participate in arts and cultural events are more likely to be physically active and engaged in their communities. A Statistics Canada study found that 51% of performing arts attendees participated in at least one sporting activity, compared to 32% of non-attendees.*

Ontarians believe that the arts are important to the quality of life in their community and to their own personal lives. The research also demonstrated how strongly these positive attitudes are held by Ontarians. Regardless of how people felt personally about the arts, they still recognized the value of the arts in their community. There's a sense that the arts are seen as a public good.”<sup>6</sup>

Regarding the health benefits of the arts, the *Arts in health: a review of the medical literature* points to “...385 references from the medical literature related to the effect of the arts and humanities in healthcare. It offers strong evidence of the influence of the arts and humanities in achieving effective approaches to patient management and to the education and training of health practitioners. It identifies the relative contribution of different art forms to the final aim of creating a therapeutic healthcare environment.

It highlights the crucial importance of the arts and humanities in:

- inducing positive physiological and psychological changes in clinical outcomes
- reducing drug consumption
- shortening length of stay in hospital
- increasing job satisfaction
- promoting better doctor-patient relationship
- improving mental healthcare”.<sup>7</sup>

Finally the arts play an important role in inspiring us, defining who we are as a society, connecting us to our own and others’ cultural heritage, and offering us transformative experiences that make us better people. The arts are key to making British Columbia a great place to live, visit and work.

### **Cuts to cultural grants in BC set back the arts infrastructure**

Continual uncertainty in funding levels makes it very difficult for arts organizations to plan their programming in advance. Furthermore, arts funding has not kept pace with inflation or the growth of BC. The provincial government should make a clear, public commitment to the arts and culture sector through developing a cultural policy, taking arts funding out of the discretionary category increasing the investment in the sector for the future.

### **Arts and culture are essential investments**

For all of the reasons above, the arts are one of the best investments that can be made by the Province of British Columbia, they are an efficient investment. Increasing the provincial investment in the arts will produce significant economic and social returns. The BC Arts Council remains for us the best institution for disseminating arts funding, and therefore is central to our recommendations.

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<sup>6</sup> *The Arts and the Quality of Life: The attitudes of Ontarians. Prepared by: Environics Research Group, March 2010* <http://www.arts.on.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=6235>

<sup>7</sup> Page 47, *Arts in health: a review of the medical literature. Dr Rosalia Lelchuk Staricoff* <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/documents/publications/phpc0eMaS.pdf>

## ProArt Recommendations for 2013-14

- 1) Increase the budget of BC Arts Council to **\$32 million**, with a plan to increase their legislated appropriated investment to **\$40 million**, over the following two-year period.
- 2) In accordance with options presented in Skip Triplett's Community Gaming Grant Review Report, we propose increasing Gaming Community Grants to organizations from \$134.9 million in 2011-12 to \$156 million for 2013-14, keeping in mind the option to substantially increase Gaming grants in the long term.
- 3) Provide stable, predictable funding for the BC Arts Council and Community Gaming Grant programs so that they can offer multi-year funding to arts and cultural organizations. We recommend specifically considering a three-year budgeting model that includes the ability to carry over unspent earmarked funds and that does not penalize successful fundraising.
- 4) The government should ensure a capital program that will help arts organizations obtain, own and maintain venues for the presentation of art.

*"An adult lifetime spent on the boards of community groups, coupled with compelling Community Gaming Grant Review input, convinces me that not-for-profit groups fill gaps in the services provided directly by the provincial government effectively and provide significantly more value than cost. Their value is high because of the passion, expertise and experience they bring to bear in their areas of interest. Their costs are low because of the volunteers they attract and because their paid staff members work for modest wages and benefits, especially in comparison with for-profit and government enterprises....Community groups inspire individuals, develop leadership, perseverance, creativity and talent, and give youth the role models they need to grow. They provide alternatives to gang-life, substance abuse, vandalism, street riots and other social ills."*

Skip Triplett, Community Gaming Grant Review Report

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