

TAPA Municipal Deputation to the Budget Committee at the city of Toronto

January 22, 2024

Presented by: Jacoba Knaapen: Executive Director, Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts (TAPA)

Good morning Budget Chief Councillor Carroll, Councillors Perks, Moise and Saxe and members of the Budget Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity for this deputation. The Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts (TAPA) is a leading arts service organization that serves 117 professional theatre, dance and opera companies in the city of Toronto. TAPA is the producer of the annual Dora Mavor Moore Awards, Canada's largest and oldest award show that recognizes excellence on Toronto stages from our award-winning artists. At TAPA we listen to the needs of our diverse membership, and we are committed to advocating on their behalf to maintain and secure funding support from the city of Toronto. Our sector has been amongst the 'hardest hit' by the pandemic and as has been frequently said, *reopening is not recovery*. We recognize that pandemic funding relief was never intended as a sustainable long-term plan, nevertheless the federal relief funding was a lifeline for a sector in crisis. It is an undisputed fact that many arts & culture organizations in Toronto are facing increasing costs, reduced or frozen revenues, combined with audience attrition that is negatively impacting earned revenue and creating a dire situation. **Between 2022-2023 44% of city-funded arts and culture organizations posted a deficit, combined all deficits totalled \$13.6 million.**

As illustrated in the infographic that TAPA created for ARTS DAY AT THE CITY this past November, we know that 'show business is big business', and here in Toronto arts & culture is an easy investment with a high return for every \$1 dollar invested leverages \$17 in revenue. In Toronto 2019 pre-pandemic, the arts & culture sector contributed \$11.3 billion to Ontario's GDP. There is no question that the arts play an essential role to the ecosystem of our city and a recent study released by the Ontario Arts Council supports this and reveals that 82% of Ontarians believe that an active local arts scene helps communities attract business. And in the recent public budget consultations conducted by the city, arts, culture, entertainment and attractions rated in the top five city services selected for increased investments by respondents to the city survey.

This morning I am here to say **thank you** to the city for your current work on a new Culture Plan for our city. **Thank you** for not making any cuts to arts and culture in the budget. And I am here on behalf of the TAPA membership to request that the campaign pledges declared by Mayor Chow be fulfilled:

- To increase Toronto Arts Council funding by \$2 million annually for five years
- To increase Local Arts Service Organizations' funding by \$1.8 million
- To work across the sector to champion accessible, affordable and sustainable spaces for artists to live and work

We look forward to working together with you ... we are going to need your partnership more than ever. In addition to advocacy and producing the annual Dora Mavor Moore Awards, as a leading arts service organization TAPA also is the founder of the popular hipTIX program which ensures accessibility to

youth to attend live theatre, dance and opera by offering affordable \$10 tickets. hipTIX has reached over 30,000 youth and I would now like to welcome Tallulah Shields who represents our future as a passionate and young arts audience member to share her thoughts.

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