



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO

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Simon Brault
Director & CEO
Canada Council for the Arts
150 Elgin Street, PO Box 1047
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5V8

September 25, 2018

Dear Simon:

As you can imagine, we regret having to send a letter such as this to an esteemed colleague. However, it became clear at the teleconference you convened last Wednesday September 18 – which included representatives of Canada Council for the Arts (CCA), Toronto Arts Council (TAC), City of Toronto Arts and Culture Services (ACS), and Ontario Arts Council (OAC) – that CCA is unwilling to acknowledge the serious discrepancy that exists between the funding CCA provides to the artists and arts organizations of Ontario vs Quebec.

It is past time for CCA to address this inequity. This is an issue that has been of great concern to OAC's board of directors and staff for years, and to the approximately 550 Ontario arts organizations to whom OAC provides annual operating support, as well as the approximately 2300 individual artists who receive OAC project grants each year.

Before going any further, I'd like to make it clear that OAC was not involved with the letter sent to you on September 11, 2018 by the Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts (TAPA). We did not know about that letter in advance, but received it the same time you, as we were copied on it, along with TAC and ACS.

That said, OAC completely supports the spirit of TAPA's letter, though we can't vouch for the statistics it cites as OAC doesn't track municipal data. We also support TAPA's right to send such a letter to the Canada Council and, indeed, were surprised to hear at last week's teleconference that CCA considered it inappropriate for TAPA to survey its 188 member organizations about their CCA funding, without first consulting CCA. TAPA's mandate is to serve its membership, and to facilitate its members if they wish to have discussions among themselves about anything, including the funding they receive from public funders, including CCA, OAC and TAC. We consider this to be an appropriate part of its job as an arts service organization.

We acknowledge that it's very unusual for OAC to comment on other public funders' decisions. But OAC believes that our province's artists and arts organizations are being seriously disadvantaged by CCA's current funding decisions and policies. Indeed, we feel that we have no choice but to speak up. I should say again, because OAC has raised this concern privately with CCA many times over the years.

Most recently, Peter Caldwell and Carolyn Vesely met with you on May 11, 2016 in Toronto. In addition to discussing CCA's upcoming digital strategy, OAC also raised the longstanding disparity of CCA funding between Ontario and Quebec, and provided supporting data. You told us that CCA was well aware of this issue and recognized it as a problem. You assured us that this discrepancy would be addressed when CCA began to dispense its new, significantly increased funding.

But nothing has changed since then. Indeed, you said at last week's teleconference that "there has been no change as a result of the new funding", and that CCA's funding of Ontario arts is "quite consistent with our historic trends". Despite your previous assurances, you now appeared unwilling to acknowledge that funding discrepancies even exist.

Instead, you referred to the "fairness and consistency of Canada Council's approach", and said "it's important that what we do is done with fairness". This was very encouraging to hear.

Unfortunately, the facts demonstrate a significant "fairness gap".

The following information is from the *Overview of Canada Council Funding and Canadian Statistics*, taken directly from the CCA website, for 2016-17 (this is the latest year available, and all numbers have been rounded to the nearest full point):

- Percentage of Canada's population
 - Ontario: **38%**
 - Quebec: **23%**
- Percentage of Canada's artists
 - Ontario: **43%**
 - Quebec: **21%**
- CCA applications assessed (number)
 - From Ontario: **35%** (6,024)
 - From Quebec: **31%** (5,455)
- CCA grants awarded (numbers)
 - To Ontario: **31%** (1,905)
 - To Quebec: **35%** (2,134)
- CCA grants awarded (dollars)
 - To Ontario: **32%** (\$59 million)
 - To Quebec: **32%** (\$58 million)

- Percentage of peer assessors
 - From Ontario: **26%**
 - From Quebec: **32%**
- Per capita CCA funding
 - Ontario: **\$4.40**
 - Quebec: **\$7.09**

Part of CCA's response when we've raised this in the past is that CCA received more applications from Quebec than Ontario – and that CCA was merely responding to the proportion of applications that it received. While this might have been the case in the past, it is no longer true today.

In 2016-17, there were **10% more applications from Ontario than Quebec**. Yet there were **12% more grants awarded to Quebec than Ontario**. If CCA is responding proportionately to the number of applications received, how could this be? Perhaps it's related to the fact that **32% of CCA peer assessors are from Quebec, and only 26% from Ontario** – a proportion wildly out of sync with the 21% of Canada's artists who live in Quebec, and 43% of whom live in Ontario.

Of course there should be way more applications to CCA from Ontario, and we hope this will be the case in future.

When we raised this issue at last week's teleconference, you told us, "every sector and geographical region thinks it is underfunded", and said that CCA heard this from just about everyone, after your major funding increase was announced. You made particular reference to British Columbia (BC) and Alberta. Using CCA's own numbers, we analyzed the distribution of CCA's overall funding by province for 2016/17, in relation to each one's population of artists. With the exception of Quebec, Ontario, Alberta and BC, all of the others seem to be more or less in sync.

However BC receives only 15% of CCA's total CCA funding, while having 18% of Canada's artists, and Alberta receives only 6% of CCA funding, while having 8% of Canada's artists. We acknowledge that these discrepancies must be very difficult for our sister provinces, and assume that you are in discussions with them to address this.

However – with great respect to all – a much greater inequity exists here in Ontario. This province has 43% of Canada's artists, but receives only 32% of CCA funding. And it is certainly very different from Quebec, which has only 21% of Canada's artists, but receives 32% of CCA funding. This disparity is very serious, and has been going on for years.

Simon, we know that you are preparing to inform the Toronto arts community "about the reality of [Canada Council's] investments in this cultural metropolis", and we all look forward to hearing your presentation. In that vein, we thought it would be helpful for you to have this

analysis about Ontario's funding in advance of the meeting this Thursday, September 27, 2:30pm, at Canada's National Ballet School.

We look forward to seeing you on Thursday.

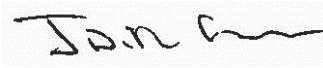
Sincerely,



Peter Caldwell
Director & CEO



Rita Davies
Chair



Judith Gelber
Vice-Chair

- cc. Pierre Lassonde, Chair, Canada Council for the Arts
Carolyn Warren, Director General Arts Granting, Canada Council for the Arts
Michelle Chawla, Director General Strategy & Public Affairs, Canada Council for the Arts
Régine Cadet, President, Board of Directors, Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts
Jacoba Knaapen, Executive Director, Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts
Claire Hopkinson, Director and CEO, Toronto Arts Council
Patrick Tobin, Director, Arts and Culture Services, City of Toronto