

STABILITY AND STRENGTH

Ontario Arts Council
Strategic Plan 2003 – 2006



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO

Violinists of the
Thunder Bay
Symphony Orchestra.
(Photo: George Holborn)



Students at Monsignor
John Corrigan School
participate in Arts Etobicoke's
Arts Discovery program.
(Photo: Pete Ledwon)



Vivine Scarlett in Dance
Immersion's *Echoing Strings*.
(Photo: Winsom)



BACKGROUND

In 1962, several visionary Ontarians approached John Robarts, Premier of Ontario, with the idea of establishing a provincial arts council. This group, led by Arthur Gelber, represented the fledgling arts infrastructure that existed then in Ontario. On April 26, 1963, Bill 162 – the legislation setting up the arts council – was given its final reading. The Ontario Arts Council (OAC) was created with a mission to *foster the creation and production of art for the benefit of all Ontarians*.

Ontarians, through their elected officials, had decided that the arts were important to their lives and deserved support through public funding. It was the beginning of a system that, with the assistance of other municipal, provincial, and federal funders, has enabled Ontario to flourish as an artistically rich and creative province.

OAC's first annual report lists grants to a total of 80 organizations. Thirty-nine years later, OAC's annual report lists 2,058 grants – 1,229 to individual artists and 829 to organizations in 236 communities across Ontario. Now in its 40th anniversary year, the Ontario Arts Council is laying out a strategic plan to guide its activity for the next three years.

Grade 2 students at
Ministik School in Moose
Factory work with Artist in
Education David Hannan
(Photo: David Hannan)



Gallery 44 - Performance
still from Empire Line
by Antonia Hirsch.
(Photo: Kim Clarke)



Kathak dancers, Julia
Widner and Jane Morris,
at the Multicultural Dance
Organization (M-Do).
(Photo: Dianna Last)



INTRODUCTION

In the spring and summer of 2002, the Ontario Arts Council undertook a series of consultations to inform its strategic planning process. Eighty-two artists and representatives of arts organizations attended consultation sessions in Toronto, Thunder Bay, London, Ottawa, and Sudbury. Twenty-five individuals, selected for their knowledge of the arts, were invited to participate in one-on-one interviews. Representatives of the Arts Council of England, Arts Council of California, and the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec gave input to a best practice analysis. Throughout the process, OAC's board and staff contributed to the development of the plan.

People felt strongly that the Ontario Arts Council needed a new framework to fulfil its fundamental role as the public agency that supports the artistic development of the province. To map out a strategic plan that will address this, the Ontario Arts Council must:

- grapple with the long-term health and sustainability of the arts infrastructure – the network of organizations that support artists and the creation of art;
- focus OAC's resources and no longer try to be all things to all people;
- strengthen the developmental role played by arts education in both quality of life and securing a future for the arts;
- support the work of individual creators; and
- promote the value of the arts by helping artists and arts organizations create deeper and more enduring relationships with their communities.

Singer Yvan Vollé performs on March 3, 2002 in Hearst, photo courtesy of the Conseil des arts de Hearst.

Dust jacket of *Solitaire — The Intimate Lives of Single Women* by Marian Botsford Fraser published by Macfarlane Walter & Ross.

Moving Pictures Festival of Dance on Film and Video – Karen Kaeja, Michael Sean Marye and Teena Walker in *Resistance*, a film by Mark Adam and Allen Kaeja, (Photo: David Hou)



The first goal in OAC's strategic plan goes to the heart of OAC's very existence. It addresses OAC's role in sustaining the arts infrastructure of the province and ensures resources are focused and provide meaningful support. It also reflects our commitment to funding individual artists in the creation of new work.

Goal 1 INVESTMENT IN THE ARTS

Support growth and sustenance of the arts in Ontario through focused investment in artists and arts organizations.

Strategies

Provide funding programs that sustain excellence, regional activity, linguistic and cultural diversity, and Aboriginal and Franco-Ontarian identity.

Maintain the assessment process to evaluate arts organizations equally on artistic quality and financial/organizational effectiveness.

Focus sustaining funding on key/anchor organizations that make a significant contribution to their art forms and have a significant impact on their communities.

Target funding to organizations that have the potential to make a significant contribution to their art forms and have a significant impact on their communities.

Ensure at least 20 percent of OAC's granting budget goes to individual artists and collectives.

Provide funding that supports renewal to arts organizations through technical assistance.

Children painting at International Children's Day festivities organized by the Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District and the Downtown Association in Sault Ste. Marie.
(Photo: William Slingsby)



Richard Léger in the Théâtre La Catapulte's production of *Tristan et Yseult* : *Innamoramento e amore*.
(Photo: François Dufresne)



Visitor examines work of Dory's Tremblay during a reception at the Galerie du Nouvel-Ontario in Sudbury.
(Photo: Nicole Poulin)



The second goal speaks to the second part of OAC's mission – that support for the arts is for the benefit of all Ontarians. It also echoes themes that emerged three years ago when the arm's-length Task Force on Arts in the Community prepared its report for the OAC board.

Goal 2 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Fund and encourage opportunities for arts education, public participation, and community involvement in the arts in Ontario.

Strategies

Provide funding programs that give Ontarians the opportunity to experience excellence in the arts and that reflect the regional activity, cultural diversity, and Aboriginal and Franco-Ontarian identity of the province.

Increase investment in and find funding partners to support arts education activity in schools and communities.

Increase investment in touring and distribution, through funding, networks, and partnerships.

Neil Braithwaite performing
in the Caliban Arts Theatre
*A Tribute to Charlie
Parker "Bird"*.
(Photo: Bobbie Inoue)



Students peruse French
books at the Salon du livre
de Toronto.
(Photo: courtesy of *L'Express*,
Toronto's French newspaper)



Parade and performance
in Nibinamik created by
community-members,
Toronto's Red Pepper Spectacle
and and Manitoulin's De ba
jeh mu jig Theatre.
(Photo: Bruce Naokwegijig)



The third goal addresses the Ontario Arts Council's role in working on behalf of the arts community by identifying trends in the arts and developing strategies to respond to needs in the arts.

Goal 3 STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

Be a leader in the arts community and work with the government to promote the value of the arts to Ontario society.

Strategies

Work to increase OAC's granting budget, and maintain it at an appropriate level.

Research and evaluate the impact of the arts on society, and communicate those results to build public awareness of the arts in Ontario.

Strive to reflect the diversity of the province through OAC's Board and staff.

Increase the visibility of OAC's Board and staff across the province as they promote the arts and public support for the arts.

Offer OAC's expertise to other funders and work to harmonize funding mechanisms in the province to bring about strategic funding decisions.

Continue to expand OAC funding resources through partnerships with the private sector.

Musician Huun-Huur-Tu from Tuva performing at the Sunfest Festival in London
(Photo: Ian Davies)



Images Festival - Opening night at screening at the Bloor Cinema.
(Photo: Jowi Taylor)



Mary Haney as the Queen in the Shaw Festival production of *His Majesty*
(Photo: Andrée Lanthier)



The fourth goal addresses the public's expectation that the Ontario Arts Council is accountable in its allocation of public funds and provides value for money in its services. The Ontario Arts Council continues to make improvements in performance measurement and program evaluation and reporting on these and grant results.

Goal 4 FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Manage OAC's resources in an effective, accountable, and transparent fashion.

Strategies

Ensure public and private funds are distributed in an effective and prudent manner.

Ensure OAC effectively manages its resources and controls its administrative costs in order to maximize resources available to support the arts.

Ensure programs have clear objectives and processes, and built-in measurements of desired impacts and accountability for public funding.

Communicate with transparency about program objectives, processes, and results.

Ensure planning processes and strategic and business plans are relevant and responsive to an evolving arts community.

Provide a positive work environment that values the primary contributions of OAC staff.

CONTACT INFORMATION AND CREDITS

Cover from left:

Dancers Tara Butler and Drew Davidson in Ballet Jörgen Canada's production of *Coppélia*. (Photo: Andrew Oxenham)

The Canadian Opera Company's production of *Oedipus Rex* with *Symphony of Psalms* at the 2002 Edinburgh International Festival, Playhouse Theatre, Scotland. (Photo: Douglas Robertson)

Artist in Education, Rodrigo Chavez (second from left) teaches music to adult learners.

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