

Arts Future BC

CONTRIBUTING TO OUR FUTURE

A Presentation to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services

Arts Future BC recommends that the Government of British Columbia increase our investment in arts and culture by bringing the British Columbia Arts Council budget to \$32 million

Presented by the Assembly of BC Arts Councils, the BC Museums Association, the BC Touring Council, Canadian Artists Representation of British Columbia, Citizens for the Arts, the Greater Vancouver Alliance for Arts and Culture, the ProArt Alliance of Greater Victoria, and the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres - the people who represent the Arts Future for British Columbia.

“The new world is a truly global economy, driven by information, ideas and discoveries. It is a creative economy, where art and culture are the building blocks of innovation, invention and understanding.”

Speech from the Throne, Province of British Columbia, February 2006

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Executive Summary

Our Cultural Resources

Our Cultural Investment

Our Interests

The Contribution of the Arts

The arts enhance education

The arts promote health and healing

The arts create connections and communities

The arts contribute to our economic strength

The arts stimulate discussion and creative thinking

The World Stage

The Opportunity

The BC Arts Council

Our Recommendation

Revenue Created

About Arts Future BC

Sources

Executive Summary

Arts Future BC recommends that the budget of the British Columbia Arts Council be increased to \$32 million.

British Columbia, Canada's gateway to the Asia-Pacific is internationally recognized as one of the most beautiful and livable places on earth; a thriving global centre for economic growth; a province rich in natural and creative resources; and a world-class tourist attraction.

The growing British Columbia economy, as well as that of western Canada, signifies the West is gaining more economic influence in this country and around the world. With strong growth in mining, construction and natural gas industries, the Province of British Columbia recently forecast a provincial surplus four times higher than originally estimated, \$1.6 billion up from the projected \$400-million dollars. The future continues to look promising, with growth expected to become even stronger in the next few years leading up to the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

British Columbia's arts and culture sector contributes significantly to economic strength and employment growth in this province, with the creative economy in British Columbia experiencing more growth than all other economic sectors. With cultural tourism becoming a key factor in this province's economic profile, British Columbians are continuing to show their appreciation for cultural goods and services. BC consumer spending on the arts and culture per capita is 11% higher than the national average, greater than any other province except Alberta.

Government spending per capita on arts and culture in British Columbia is below average. At \$14.2 million, the BC Arts Council has one of the lowest budgets of any provincial arts council in Canada. Provincial government funding in British Columbia from all sources makes up an average of 7% of the operating budgets of performing arts organizations. This is the lowest in Canada. The cost of increasing the BC Arts Council's budget to \$32 million would amount to barely more than 1% of the projected provincial surplus.

Cultural organizations – large and small – are now uniting with thousands of concerned British Columbians to raise their voice in support of an increased investment in the British Columbia Arts Council, this province's principal vehicle for public investment in the development of our creative resources. Arts Future BC is the representative of this province-wide call for change, and we are recommending a major increase in the Government of British Columbia's investment in arts and culture by bringing the BC Arts Council budget to \$32 million.

At a time when the world will turn its attention to British Columbia under the Olympic spotlight, we have the opportunity to demonstrate leadership in our cultural development. It is a time for bold decision-making that will transform the cultural landscape of British Columbia, ensuring our place as one of the most dynamic and creative places on earth.

Arts Future BC represents 903 organizations from across the province: 423 museums; 98 Community and Regional Arts Councils and community arts organizations; 123 community presenters; 183 professional arts organizations; 27 educational institutions; and 51 arts service organizations. Arts Future BC also represents thousands of individual artists and their students and audiences across British Columbia.

Arts Future BC is interested in creating a sustained commitment of all communities to the development of our cultural resources - for our citizens, our children, and for our future.

Our Cultural Resources

British Columbia has the highest number of artists per capita in the country. Vancouver has the largest concentration of any major city in Canada and Victoria has the second largest. North Vancouver, Saanich, and New Westminster are among the top ten cities with the highest concentration of artists, and seven of the top ten municipalities with the highest number of artists per capita are also located in BC.

British Columbia has the highest growth rate of artists in the country. The number of artists grew by 47% in BC over the ten-year period between 1991 and 2001, compared to a 29% growth rate nationally and a 33% growth rate in Ontario, the province with the second highest growth rate. The overall labour force grew by 18% in BC over the same period.

British Columbians appreciate and value cultural goods and services. British Columbians spent \$3.1 billion on cultural goods and services in 2003, 3.3% of total consumer spending. BC consumer spending on culture per capita is 11% higher than the national average, greater than any other province except Alberta. BC residents spend 67% more on live performing arts events than on live sports events.

Our Cultural Investment

Overall consumer spending on the arts and culture in British Columbia is above average and government spending per capita on arts and culture is below average.

Provincial Government funding in British Columbia from all sources makes up an average of 7% of the operating budgets of performing arts organizations. This is the lowest in Canada. The national average is 13%. In Quebec, provincial funding accounts for 26% of a performing arts organization's budget.

The Government of Ontario plans to increase support to its Arts Council by \$55 million by fiscal 2009/2010. Last year the Government of Alberta added \$4.5 million to the Alberta Foundation for the Arts. The other western provinces have also increased their contribution bringing their per capita investment well above British Columbia's.

Our investment per capita in our creative resources is lagging behind the other large provinces of Canada. The Alberta Foundation for the Arts has a budget of \$22.8 million or \$6.90 per capita. Quebec's investment in its Arts Council is at \$9.75 per capita, Manitoba's is \$8.27 per capita and Saskatchewan's is \$6.30 per capita. At \$14.2 million, or \$3.45 per capita of total population, the BC Arts Council has one of the lowest budgets of any provincial arts council in Canada. Funding for Aboriginal artists in BC is \$1.29 compared to \$2.32 in Ontario and \$2.30 in Saskatchewan.

Our Interests

The Five Great Goals articulated by the Provincial Government are to:

- Make British Columbia the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent.
- Lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness
- Build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, special needs, children at risk, and seniors
- Lead the world in sustainable environmental management, with the best air and water quality, and the best fisheries management
- Create more jobs per capita than anywhere else in Canada

The Contribution of the Arts

The arts enhance education

Research has conclusively demonstrated the connection between arts exposure and academic performance and without exception concludes that learning is strengthened through participation in the arts.

Learning through the Arts, a three year national research study conducted by Queen's University concluded that involvement in the arts contributed to student achievement as much as 11 percentile points higher in math than their peers. Ninety per cent of parents reported that the arts motivated their children to learn. Teachers, parents, artists, and administrators talked about how the arts motivated children, referring to the emotional, physical, cognitive, and social benefits of learning in and through the arts.

Critical Evidence: How the Arts Benefit Student Achievement, a comprehensive study of evidence-based research on what we have learned about the arts and student achievement was recently conducted by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies and the Arts Education Partnership. The report concluded that:

- learning experiences in the arts contribute to the development of academic skills in reading, language development, and mathematics.
- participation in the arts contributes to our thinking skills including our reasoning ability, intuition, perception, imagination, inventiveness, creativity, problem-solving skills, and expression.
- arts activities promote growth in positive social skills, including self-confidence, self-control, conflict resolution, collaboration, empathy, and social tolerance, and contribute to developing social competencies among educationally or economically disadvantaged youth at risk.
- the arts nurture a motivation to learn, particularly with those at risk and students with special needs, improving competencies in active engagement, disciplined and sustained attention, persistence, and risk taking, and contribute to creating a positive learning

environment that fosters community engagement, increased student attendance, more effective instructional practice, and school identity.

Despite convincing research and strong public support, the arts remain on the margins of education.

The arts promote health and healing

Research has provided strong evidence that the arts improve the health and wellbeing of both individuals and communities, and promote individual and community healing following traumatic experiences.

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.

Research by the **Canada West Foundation** indicates that cultural activity contributes to the health and well being of citizens, improved community identity and social cohesion, community revitalization and the redevelopment of inner cities.

In a **Roundtable on Music and Medicine hosted by the National Arts Centre**, Louise T. Blouin MacBain, the chair of the Louise T. Blouin Foundation, whose mandate is to promote creativity and support research, said that music can help stroke victims to walk, terminal patients to relax, mothers to give birth, troubled teens to learn social skills, students to study, Alzheimer's patients to remember, and unborn children to respond to the environment around them.

The arts are most effective where the largest costs on the health care and social systems occur - for seniors, the disabled, and youth at risk. Older citizens experience strong positive impacts on their outlook on life, cognitive functioning, physical comfort, quality of life, and general health from involvement with the arts.

Research from the **California Arts Council** shows the value of the arts to the fields of health and social services, demonstrated by how the arts contribute to brain development, healing, prevention and treatment of Alzheimer's disease, rehabilitating prisoners, and saving youth-at-risk.

The arts create connections and communities

Creative initiatives are needed to deal with social issues and economic disparity. Participation in arts activities has been proven to reduce youth violence, help prevent drug addiction, support rehabilitation, be a critical element in mental health treatment, and reduce reliance on social programs.

In *From Bronze to Gold: A Blueprint for Canadian Leadership in a Transforming World*, the **Canadian Council of Chief Executives** concluded that artistic and cultural creativity

plays an important role in transforming communities into destinations of choice for skilled people in any occupation. A community's cultural infrastructure has a direct impact on quality of life and on the competitiveness of communities in attracting people and investment

The **Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce** states that for young Indo-Canadians, celebration of their vibrant contribution to BC's identity is vital to their sense of pride and confidence, and builds respect for the South Asian community among the public at large. This leads to a reduction of racial tensions and violence, promotes positive role models, showcases our culture and creates new opportunities for our youth.

From Restless Communities to Resilient Places: Building A Stronger Future For All Canadians, the June 2006 **Final Report of the External Advisory Committee on Cities and Communities** concluded that those Canadian cities and communities that have recognized the importance of culture are better positioned to meet future challenges and opportunities. Strong cultural engagement can substantially improve the cohesiveness, confidence and international image and attractiveness of places.

The arts contribute to our understanding of our common interests and our appreciation of the value of our differences and contribute to creating a society that respects and appreciates one another, and to creating communities that work together to make our communities strong.

The arts are a positive way to build community engagement, especially for those who feel marginalized, isolated or alone. Participation in the arts enables people to feel they are a part of the community and provides a valuable connection to the rest of society.

The arts contribute to our economic strength and employment growth

The economic impact of the arts and our creative resources is far greater than the employment or economic multipliers our creative industries generate. The arts attract people to live and work in our Province, reduce turnover for employers, and contribute to the stability of our workforce. The arts also help create cross-cultural understanding that improves workplace and customer relationships and contributes to more successful enterprise.

When we think of famous travel destinations, we think about the vibrancy and significance of their arts, culture and heritage. Cultural tourists spend more per day, stay longer at a destination and use more commercial accommodation. Cultural Tourism is growing globally at an annual rate of 15%.

The creative economy is leading the growth of all economic sectors in British Columbia. Between 1991 and 2001, people employed in the arts grew by 57% in Vancouver, more than five times the 10% overall growth of the labour force.

Communities in British Columbia, including Kelowna, Nelson and Langley, have developed strategic plans that use the creative arts to drive their economies and the social health of their communities. Chemainus with its world-famous murals and theatre has successfully replaced a resource-based economy with an arts-based economy.

Increased arts and cultural activity is key to attracting gifted professionals. Alcan says that cultural life and amenities in towns like Kitimat, where the company is planning a \$1.8 billion upgrade of its smelting operations, are crucial factors in attracting talented people, jobs and investment.

Our creative industries need creative people. Creative people are attracted by opportunities to engage in and experience the arts and the creative expression of others.

The arts stimulate discussion and creative thinking

We are passing from the information age to the creative age. The world is wrestling with environmental and human sustainability issues and there is a great need for creative problem solving. The arts carry important messages, often leading to social change and new ways to address human issues. The arts stimulate creative and divergent thinking and discussion, provide a forum for communication, and build communities around common concerns.

Our cultural development contributes to our community development, social development, and sustainable economic development. The health of our society largely depends upon our ability to improve our intercultural relationships, to learn how to connect, communicate, and understand one another, and to create new ideas and new ways of doing things.

The World Stage

We will be attracting the attention of the world and showcasing British Columbia and Canada leading up to and during the 2010 Winter Olympics. We have two years to create ideas and inspire initiatives to create a Cultural Olympiad and a legacy to complement the Sports Olympiad.

We have the opportunity to attract attention to our cultural and creative resources; to demonstrate the benefits and contribution of being a culturally diverse and creative community. We can increase appreciation for the value of the arts and demonstrate that the contribution of the arts goes far beyond the entertainment and pleasure they bring to artists and audiences.

Artists from British Columbia are well known and admired around the world. Bill Reid, Robert Davidson, Bryan Adams, Ben Heppner, Sarah McLaughlin, Ken Lum, Jeff Wall, Diana Krall, Michael J. Fox, Nelly Furtado and many others have raised our profile and created connections for us on the world stage.

British Columbia attracts residents and visitors with the natural beauty of the province and its reputation as the most livable place on the planet. We have the opportunity to demonstrate we are also a culturally diverse and creatively rich place to complement our natural advantages and secure our reputation.

The Opportunity

We can show leadership in our cultural development and our ability to become a cultural mecca. We can share innovative ideas with the rest of Canada and the world. The arts are how we create connections, new ideas and opportunities.

With the increased competition for professional staff and skilled labour, the increased ability of creative and talented people to live and work where they choose, and the increased interest in cultural tourism around the world, British Columbia has the opportunity to exploit one of its greatest resources – the richness of its arts and culture.

We have the ability to act immediately to excite interest in the development of our creative resources at the community level and stimulate and support the creation of new ideas in our established organizations through the British Columbia Arts Council.

The British Columbia Arts Council

There are many ways we can invest - creating new facilities to increase our capacity, increasing arts programming in our schools, investing in initiatives that increase appreciation for the arts, and designing programs that excite more active participation and contribution in our communities.

The BC Arts Council is the principal vehicle for public investment in the development of our creative resources. The BC Arts Council currently supports arts and cultural activities in 225 communities throughout the province, and is the best way to deliver the core funding that will allow communities to benefit from this growth industry.

The role of the British Columbia Arts Council is to assist the arts and cultural community to achieve its creative, social and economic potential and is to ensure that all British Columbians are able to participate in a healthy arts and cultural community recognized for its excellence.

The BC Arts Council is the **only** 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.

It is acknowledged that the Government of British Columbia invests in the arts in other ways, and through other branches and agencies – as do the other provinces (e.g. the Ontario Trillium Foundation with \$105 million from the Government of Ontario, roughly 25% of which is allocated each year to Arts and Culture) – and this is much appreciated. However, these funds tend by their nature to be discretionary, and tied to special events

or occasions, or one-time projects. What the arts and cultural community needs is dependable, dedicated, long-term, secure core funding so that they may plan prudently and effectively over the long term.

Such core funding ensures stable and sustainable arts organizations that contribute to the economic and social wellbeing of the community.

The BC Arts Council invests in emerging artists, in sustaining and assisting the development and growth of established arts organizations, in the development of aboriginal communities, in the development of organizations that contribute to and represent the interests of our diverse cultures, in our museums and heritage sites, in our arts presenters, and in the community arts councils and local and regional arts initiatives that contribute to the quality of community life throughout British Columbia.

There are 98 Community and Regional Arts Councils in BC, representing the interests of communities from Haida Gwaii to Valemont, and from Fort St. John to Victoria and 73% receive operating support from the BC Arts Council with an average grant of \$11,500. One half are entirely volunteer run, and more than half can only afford to hire casual or part-time staff to assist them in their work. Less than 20% are able to engage a full time staff person. Only 43 of the 423 museums in BC are funded by the BC Arts Council.

In British Columbia, the BC Arts Council funded 31 community arts festivals in 2005 with \$72,000 compared to Ontario where the Provincial Government funded 39 festivals with \$800,000.

The BC Arts Council contributes to the health of our cultural organizations, the ongoing initiatives that employ and showcase our creative resources and our cultural contribution to the world, and the creation and development of new initiatives.

Recommendation

Arts Future BC recommends that the Government of British Columbia increase our investment in arts and culture by bringing the British Columbia Arts Council budget to \$32 million.

Return on Investment

Increasing our investment through the BC Arts Council will create the fastest response of any initiative we can act on. Increasing our investment in the BC Arts Council will contribute immediately to:

- Increased cultural tourism
- Increased investments from federal and regional sources
- Increased support for aboriginal communities
- Increase in the contribution of the cultural sector to the GDP

- Increased access to arts and cultural activities in communities across British Columbia
- Increased support for emerging artists
- Increased private investment in arts and culture, especially in smaller centres
- Increased partnerships with business
- Increased financial security for arts organizations operating with deficits
- Increase in the number of artists in schools
- Increase in the arts programs in clinics, hospitals and nursing homes
- Expanded partnerships between artists and social services agencies to assist youth-at-risk.
- Enhanced quality of life for British Columbians
- Providing paid staff for community arts organizations
- Increased touring activities for British Columbia companies throughout the province, nationally and internationally
- Encouraging artists and producing organizations to take creative risks
- Raising the profile and prestige of British Columbia within Canada and around the world, and
- Contributing to the success of the 2010 Cultural Olympiad and the 2010 Olympic and Paralympics Games.

Revenue Created

British Columbia was the third largest producer of culture output in Canada in 2003, contributing 5 billion dollars to the provincial gross domestic product. British Columbians spent \$3.1 billion on cultural goods and services in 2003. BC residents spent 67% more on live performing arts events than on live sporting events.

The \$14 million currently invested in the BC Arts Council helps drive \$4.2 billion in provincial domestic economic activity. The City of Vancouver has determined that every dollar the city invests in the arts leverages \$11.50 from other sources. The funds to increase investment in the BC Arts Council will be returned by the arts themselves.

The Case for Investment in the Arts, a study conducted for the Council for Business and the Arts in Canada (Now business for the Arts) by McKinsey and Company in May 2006 reported that:

- the arts in Canada provide an economic engine which drives impact at as much as eight times the level of public sector investment. As a result, more than 80% of this public sector investment comes back to the government in the form of taxes
- savings will be made in social services, health care and educational costs due to the positive impact of arts and cultural programs on increased self-esteem and confidence in young people and health benefits for disabled adults and senior citizens

- the arts are an excellent investment, generating revenues and increased tourism, with the performing arts alone producing a return of more than 200% in direct and indirect benefits

While corporate leaders found the numbers impressive, they all recognized that the real return on investment from culture is not monetary. It is not the reason we make art and the reason we need art in our lives. Our arts make us unique, record our lives, provide forum for debate, ultimately improve education, create community engagement, drive national identity, and encourage multicultural expression.

They also concluded that the financial viability and sustainability of the arts and cultural sector is hugely influenced by investment from government. Public sector investment is essential as the catalyst for private sector support.

About Arts Future BC

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