

# THE CANADIAN ARTS COALITION

## LA COALITION CANADIENNE DES ARTS

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### **Coalition calls for increased investment in the arts**

(Ottawa) – An impressive array of arts organizations announced today that they are building a broad based coalition to convince the federal government to increase its investment in the arts.

The Canadian Arts Coalition aims to highlight the essential role of the arts in the lives of Canadians and share information with government decision makers that demonstrates the significant, yet undervalued, contribution that the arts make to Canada's cultural, social and economic life. To ensure an adequate investment in artistic creation, research, development and production, the Coalition is seeking an increased investment of \$5 per capita for the arts through the Canada Council for the Arts.

“The sheer power of music, books or theatre are beyond measurable value. Their pleasure is without limit. The riches of the visual arts, or just enjoying the best of comedy in any media, need no justification. The arts are about how we live and not just what we have,” says R.H. Thomson, actor and director.

“Recent studies show that Canadians understand that the arts also define us as a country and contribute to the vitality and competitiveness of our communities. Together we will be mobilizing those who respect this role to place the arts higher in the federal government's agenda,” adds Édouard Lock, choreographer and artistic director of LaLaLa Human Steps.

In its policy platform, the federal Liberal party committed to increasing support for Canada's arts organizations through the Canada Council of the Arts. In addition to this specific commitment, the Coalition's goal to obtain increased funding for the arts is directly linked to the federal government's New Deal for Cities and Communities agenda where culture and creativity are identified as one of the four pillars of competitive, prosperous cities and communities.

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Association nationale des éditeurs de livres ~ Association of Canadian Publishers ~ Book and Periodical Council ~ Canadian Art Museum Directors Organization ~ Canadian Arts Summit/Sommet Canadien des Arts ~ Canadian Artists Representation/Le front des artistes canadiens ~ Canadian Conference of the Arts/Conférence canadienne des arts ~ Canadian Crafts Federation/Fédération canadienne des métiers d'art ~ Canadian Dance Assembly/Assemblée canadienne de la danse ~ Canadian League of Composers/Ligue canadienne de compositeurs ~ Canadian Museums Association/Association des musées canadiens ~ Conseil québécois du théâtre ~ Greater Vancouver Alliance for Arts and Culture ~ Independent Media Arts Alliance/Alliance des arts médiatiques indépendants ~ Magazines Canada ~ Le Mouvement pour les arts et les lettres ~ Opera.ca ~ Orchestras Canada/Orchestres Canada ~ Periodical Writers Association of Canada ~ Playwrights Guild of Canada ~ Professional Association of Canadian Theatres ~ Regroupement des éditeurs canadiens-français ~ Regroupement québécois de la danse ~ Union des écrivaines et écrivains québécois ~ The Writers' Union of Canada ~ Société de développement des périodiques culturels québécois ~ Société des musées québécois

Increased funding for the arts also supports the federal government's objectives of supporting creativity and innovation as it relates to increasing Canada's productivity and in reflecting Canada's regional and cultural diversity. In light of these synergies, the Canadian Arts Coalition is very pleased that the Honourable Liza Frulla, Minister of Canadian Heritage, has identified arts funding as her number one priority.

Canada's artists and arts organizations are an economic force at the creative heart of the \$39 billion cultural sector – bigger than the agriculture, forestry, mining and oil and gas sectors combined. Without the imagination and creative engagement of Canada's artists, Canadian society would be impoverished.

Public investment is pivotal to the complex financing that supports the arts. Yet Canada's current contribution to the arts lags far behind most of its European counterparts both in per capita spending and spending as a percentage of gross domestic product.

The federal government's primary vehicle for arts support is the Canada Council for the Arts, which supports 2,100 arts organizations and a similar number of individual professional artists. Since 1998, the Canada Council has seen a 50 per cent increase in the number of applications from arts organizations and a 30 per cent increase from individual artists. Each year, 12,000 eligible arts organizations and artists must be turned down for support, resulting in an enormous loss of creative potential for Canada.

"We believe it is critical that public funding keep pace with both the growth in the artistic community as well as the higher and higher standards that the community has set itself," concludes Mr. Thomson. "A \$5 per capita increase in funding to the Canada Council would mean increased access to Canadian arts education, an increase in the arts' contribution to the economy and a higher international appreciation of Canadian works."

The Canadian Arts Coalition represents a broad range of organizations that believe a significant increase in federal funding for the arts is essential to Canada's future.

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