

CANADIAN CONFERENCE OF THE ARTS
NATIONAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF MEMBERS
Ottawa - June 18, 2009

Dear friends and colleagues,

As our President says in her report, the past year has been an important one on the Canadian Conference of the Arts' road to repositioning. Throughout the year, in keeping with our new Three-year Plan, we have kept the focus on the strategic alignment of our activities.

The important role of the CCA as an observer and analyst of cultural policy issues at the federal level has been amply evidenced by the distribution to over one thousand stakeholders of no less than 50 bulletins between April 1, 2008 and March 31, 2009. As usual, we published last summer our annual in-depth analysis of the Federal Budget and Supplementary Estimates from the arts and culture perspective. In response to several questions raised during the federal election about the level of funding given by the federal government to arts and culture, the CCA also published an analysis of arts and culture funding under the 39th Parliament: this document was referred to on several occasions during the campaign and even achieved the unusual honour of being quoted during the French Leader's debate!

We have set up an Advisory Committee on research comprised of academics from various universities who help us identify projects and develop partnerships. Research projects were realized within the context of our *Cultural Policy/Next Generation Program* where we partner with Canadian and foreign universities. With our partners of the Centre of Expertise on Culture and Communities, at Simon Fraser University, we have given a follow up to our March 2008 report *The creative economy: from economy to ecology*: the next instalment, titled *Work Flows and Flexicurity* pursues the reflection and research on the work conditions of creative workers in the new economy and will be published in the coming months.

In preparation for the series of Regional Forums, we commissioned two documents on the theme of how other organizations, both in Canada and in other countries, manage to get their policy priorities on the political agenda of decision makers.

As part of CCA's commitment to cultural policy issues, I have agreed to become Chair of National Advisory Committee on Cultural Statistics and de facto member of Service Industries Consultative Committee at Statistics Canada. This gives the CCA a chance to collaborate with other stakeholders to ensure that the arts and culture sector gets the relevant and timely data essential to the development and evaluation of policies and programs meant to support its vitality and growth. This Chairmanship also provides us with an opportunity to extend and consolidate the links which the CCA has with other stakeholders in arts and culture.

Throughout the year, and in keeping with its Strategic Plan, the CCA has been setting up committees and teleconference groups which make it better connected with stakeholders and therefore more relevant to the sector.

In keeping with its advocacy mandate, the CCA has participated in a number of public debates, notably in front of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, on fundamental issues like new media, network neutrality and the funding of Canadian programs. We have communicated our views on the budget and on the Economic Stimulus package through submissions to the Parliamentary Committee on Finance and through letters to the government and opposition parties. We have also appeared in front of the Senate Committee on

Banking, Trade and Commerce in the context of the revision of Bill C-10 and the controversy about its potential for censorship on the part of the government.

For me, one of the most defining moments of the year will have been the series of 14 Regional Forums which I conducted across the country over a period of seven weeks last fall. For the first time after three years as National Director, these forums gave me the opportunity to connect with our members in their own environment and to witness first hand the unique character of our organization, namely its capacity to bring together cultural workers from a same community who rarely have the opportunity to meet and discuss issues of common interest. It is this unique characteristic, the inclusiveness of our membership and our potential as network of networks, which constitute the greatest assets of the CCA and ensure the value it adds to the sector at large.

As was mentioned in the President's report, CCA's profile has been enhanced over the past twelve months in part because of the controversy following the federal budget cuts to arts and culture, the unexpected role cultural issues played in the federal election, the media exposure these events provided for the CCA and the series of Regional Forums. This in turn has led to more frequent outreach opportunities. For example, as National Director, I was invited in September to give a conference at the Institut national de recherche scientifique in Québec City. In October, I participated in a debate on censorship at the University of Victoria. In November, I made a presentation to Ottawa University students and, in February, I was on a panel in Toronto organized by the Books and Periodical Association on the theme "Our country, our culture".

On the human resources front, we have seen a number of changes within the Secretariat. We were sorry to lose our Policy Advisor, Guillaume Sirois, who distinguished himself by winning a much coveted Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation Fellowship to pursue studies on cultural diversity. But we were very fortunate to find in Jessica Litwin a worthy candidate to succeed Guillaume. Through restructuring the work within the Secretariat, we were able to create the position of Development Officer, now occupied by Alessia Bongiovanni who was previously my Executive Assistant. And thanks partly to a Cultural Human Resources Council grant, we have been able to renew with the tradition of receiving a policy intern. This is part of a plan whereby we will be able to increase our analysis and research capacity and to provide work experience to young talented individuals interested in policy development. Thanks to the excellent work accomplished by this year's intern Heather Robson, we have been able to complete our Workshop on Cultural Policy 101 which, with the support of a grant from the Trillium Foundation, will be presented in the coming months in five communities all across Ontario.

Despite all the accomplishments of the past year, one fact remains: the CCA must meet the financial challenges facing it if it is to improve on the delivery of its unique but very broad mandate. Over the past year, we have taken measures to address these challenges. With the assistance of an expert, we have explored strategies which could lead to increased, diversified and stable funding. The conclusion of this study has been that in the current environment, and given the very specialized nature of CCA's mission, there is no quick fix for this challenge and the best road to fundraising is through "friendraising". This can be accomplished over a period of time through raising the profile of the organization and ensuring that its "value proposition" is clear and convincing for funders, current and prospective members and, hopefully, some generous donors.

The CCA is working hard on plans and projects leading to greater involvement of our members. In the coming months, thanks to the Trillium Foundation grant, we will be developing a

comprehensive communications plan which will include the material for a membership recruitment and retention campaign. In the meantime, it has proved necessary to adopt a strict deficit reduction plan: this includes some downsizing in human resources and moving to smaller and much more affordable office space.

There is no doubt that the road ahead is still fraught with challenges and difficulties, but I think we can be proud of what has been accomplished over the past three years. I am confident that this organization will be able to consolidate itself as the leader, catalyst and advocate its mission and vision statements call for.

In closing, I would like to extend my warmest thanks to all Board members and to the staff for the continuing support they have given me over the past year. I would like in particular to thank our previous Chair, Robert Spickler, for having been a most generous mentor for me during my first three years as National Director. I also want to thank my predecessor, Keith Kelly, who has acted as Senior Policy Advisor during the same period and has provided me with invaluable support and advice. Keith is leaving the CCA for the second time today but we will always be grateful for the remarkable contribution he has made to the organization during a total of thirteen years.

Alain Pineau
National Director