



Canadian Dance Assembly  
L'Assemblée canadienne de la danse

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## **STOP THE ARTS CUTS!**

Arts organizations more than ever need to think sustainably, collectively and responsibly, given the serious cuts in Canadian arts funding. Everywhere in the country, arts professionals are wondering whether the next cut will come from the city, province or the federal government. Like a tsunami, the cuts are threatening to swamp vulnerable cultural expressions and organizations.

It all started in 2008, when the federal government's international touring grants were cancelled. Last year brought devastating cuts in arts and culture funding in BC, followed by Alberta a few months later. A few weeks ago and in the same spirit, an anxious arts community witnessed the verbal assault of the internationally-acclaimed Quebec dancer Margie Gillis on the new Sun television channel.

It's clear that we are just in the middle of this sad story. This week brought news that two national, Ottawa-based, arts service organizations, the Cultural Human Resources Council and the 60-year old Canadian Conference of the Arts will lose their federal funding.

Two days later came the report of KPMG, commissioned by the City of Toronto. This international firm was hired to identify city services as mandatory, essential, traditional and to establish priorities. Arts have been identified as "traditional" and the report stated the city may wish to consider reducing or eliminating funding in this area. Margaret Atwood has launched a campaign to defend public libraries and we fully support this effort. Many artists are speechless; others decided to raise their voices at the mayor's public consultation session held July 28. But, the fear in the community is how far will these initiatives extend and what will be the impact of further cuts?

The [Canadian Dance Assembly](#) provides services to dance professionals across the country, but close to half our members are Toronto-based. Although Mayor Rob Ford openly affirmed his support for the arts community, in a radio interview on July 22 he sounded paradoxical: "I can't sit here and justify handing out \$50 million in grants when we're looking for \$750 million". (Arts grants make up \$19 million of this total).

Arts are essential to Canada. Strong arts communities bring economic prosperity, tourism and healthy communities. The economic crisis only reinforces the need for more arts opportunities, as an antidote to the stress and anxiety we all feel. If the cuts to the arts continue, there will be a steep price to pay not only by the artists themselves, but by the entire community. "Every \$1 saved in arts grants is going to end up costing the city \$17" says Jeff Melanson, CEO of the National Ballet School of Canada and Special advisor on arts and culture of Mayor Ford. What will be the impact of further cuts in the dance field where the average income is only \$18,000<sup>i</sup>? It is very worrisome when arts are seen as a "frill," compared to other public services<sup>ii</sup>. While all of us in the arts continue to seek other sources of revenue and to achieve sustainability, public support remains essential.

To avoid this impending disaster, we need all artists and other arts professionals, as well as our supporters and sponsors, to send a letter to their local councilors, members of provincial assemblies and Members of Parliament, asking them to keep supporting arts and culture in each Canadian community. We know that there are politicians across the country, in every political party, who understand the value of arts in our communities. We call on all Canadians to join us today, our voices must be heard!

Nathalie Fave,  
Executive Director

Michael Trent,  
President

<sup>i</sup> Mid-career dancers (average 39 years old), with 18 years of professional dance experience have an average annual income of about \$18,000. Source : Arts Research Monitor- March 2011( [Volume: 9 Issue No: 10](#) )-

<sup>ii</sup> The cultural sector has about 600,000 workers, which is about double the level of employment in the forestry sector in Canada (300,000) and more than double the level of employment in Canadian banks (257,000). Source: [A Statistical Profile of Artists in Canada : Based on the 2006 Census](#), Hill Strategies Research, 2009