

CREATIVE TRUST TRUST

WORKING CAPITAL FOR THE ARTS

Fall 2006
Volume 3, Issue 1

Talking to (and about) our Audiences

Creative Trust's Lead Associates George Thorn and Nello McDaniel of ARTS Action Research, through their work with hundreds of arts organizations, have explored and analyzed how the best arts marketers reach and expand their audiences.

One of their conclusions is that it's getting harder. According to McDaniel, "A common concern is the changing behaviour of audiences." Subscribers are in decline. Audience members seem to have "acquired attention deficit disorder" as a result of internet use and access to multiple rapidly-presented images and messages.

We recently asked some of the city's smartest marketers what they're doing to stay on top of changing audience patterns and needs.

Sue Edworthy, Director of Marketing, Theatre Passe Muraille

The drop-off in audience is due, I think, to the tremendous increase in entertainment options and our on-demand society. Ticket buyers are waiting to make purchases until the day of going out. Single ticket sales are a growing trend; people are much more sophisticated in choosing how, why and when they purchase tickets.

Technology is becoming key, as is niche marketing. We're expanding our definitions of marketing, trying to find the links between what we produce and the audience who will come, as well as who we want to come! Marketing is no longer only brochures and posters — blogs, podcasts, interactive websites all play a significant role. We've also expanded our traditional ideas of media, looking at markets that may previously have been ignored or untapped. And we're looking more at guerilla marketing, whether that's theatre in the streets or responding to a blog commentary to boost your rankings. During our Stage3 series last season we saw people in the theatre who not only had never been to Passe Muraille, but had never been to the theatre before.

Marketing is now a company wide mission. The Noble Parasites, a show we're producing next spring, has a 1984/Handmaid's Tale bent to it, and one of the actors has a following in the sci fi world. The internet is going to be a huge research tool to help find groups who follow this actor and members of sci fi book clubs, and get them into the theatre — perhaps by offering an artist chat afterwards. As more people look for value-added experiences, we're finding this sort of approach works.

While reading the other day a sentence struck me... "like the rest of

his teenage friends, Ben has never known a world without broadband, cell phones, MP3s, TiVo and online shopping." This is the audience of the future, and we'd do well to keep up with them. At a Creative Trust session we talked about the idea of texting people's cell phones with messages saying 'Tickets available for tonight's performance', and by replying they could book instantly. It's exciting but it's a delicate balance. One way we'll continue to talk to our audiences is in person — theatre's a social live experience, and that must not be forgotten.

Monica Estevez, Producer, Nightwood Theatre

At Nightwood we're making headway by 'owning' and using to our advantage our unique mandate as Canada's national women's theatre. We can't compete in terms of marketing units (dollars) so we're doing what we learned in Creative Trust's Learning Audiences session — using really good creative, and going directly to women's organizations and networks.

This year we initiated a 'pass holder season' to protect ourselves from the anxiety of waiting to opening night to see if you sell your show. It's going well. But we needed to speak more directly to current supporters and others.

We're spending time on very direct marketing campaigns, going to firms and offices to talk about the company. Our new board members have been especially active in bringing Nightwood to their places of employment. We had an event called Leading Ladies with senior executive women from all over the GTA, and followed up by sitting down one-on-one to get these women's impressions of the company. Over coffee, breakfast, dinner and drinks we're finding people who are interested in the interesting, the risky.

We're also changing the language in our materials to emphasize the importance of Nightwood's community contributions, socially and artistically. Nightwood has always had a social/political bent. 2006 is year one of a new five year plan for the theatre. Our relatively new staff is experiencing a huge learning curve together with a big growth spurt. Having new materials, bumping up the marketing, is exciting and lighting a fire under our board — also eliciting a great response from donors and artists. We're becoming more accessible by helping audiences know we're here. We continue to do exciting work that embodies risk, and I do my job with complete faith in the work we're doing in this community.



Sue Edworthy
Theatre Passe Muraille



Monica Estevez
Nightwood Theatre



Kendra Kry
Caboots Theatre Projects

CONNECTING ART WITH AUDIENCES LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"For artists and arts providers, the need and desire to make, produce, perform and present art is equaled only by the need and desire to connect that art with an audience." Growing Audiences: Creating Value, Meaning and Energy by Nello McDaniel and George Thorn

While the above is unquestionably true, a question still remains: what do our audiences most need and desire? Creative Trust has been challenging our companies to radically rethink how they connect with the people they want in their theatres.

As our cover story confirms, audience behavior is changing. People find and respond to entertainment information differently than they used

to, and they're looking for work that connects deeply to their interests and values.

Toronto's mid-sized theatres, dealing with the new and risky on stage, have become equally inventive in finding new ways to speak to their audiences. Creative Trust companies have been trail-blazers in arts outreach, providing 1,674 learning programs annually to 113,520 people young and old. They perform to over 500,000 people each year — more than attend the Stratford Festival.

We continue to see many remarkable audience development successes among our participants: this season, Factory Theatre tripled its sales of youth passes, and the Lorraine Kimsa

Theatre significantly increased revenues while lowering ticket prices, thereby providing access for children regardless of financial means.

Most of our companies have limited staffs and marketing budgets, and rely upon creative low-cost ideas and unquenchable enthusiasm to get their message out. Creative Trust has also provided new approaches through a series of learning sessions on audience development, new technology, and marketing works-in-process.

Together this community of mid-sized and small companies has been sharing, inspiring each other, and moving forward to a position of leadership in the art and craft of Growing Audiences.

NEW AT CREATIVE TRUST

Annual General Meeting

At a reception following the Creative Trust Annual General Meeting held on June 21, 2006 at Cantine Bistro Creative Trust announced \$150,000 from Ontario's Ministry of Culture in support of the Working Capital for the Arts program.

The show of support by the Government of Ontario, announced by M.P.P. Jennifer Mossop, Parliamentary Assistant to Culture Minister Caroline di Cocco, advanced Creative Trust one step closer to its six-year, \$6.1 million funding target.

The announcement from the Ministry set the perfect tone for an evening filled with celebration.

Also announced were the recipients of Creative Trust's 2006 Working Capital Awards and Deficit Reduction Grants.

Performing arts companies chosen to participate in Creative Trust, have been involved in an intensive process of work including professional assistance in strategic planning, administrative support, and financial management. Those who successfully completed this work for 2005, and succeeded in maintaining a balanced bottom line, received Working Capital Awards to support their continued success. For companies that demonstrated achievement in reducing accumulated debt, Creative Trust contributed 1-to-1 matching Deficit Reduction Grants.



M.P.P. Jennifer Mossop, Claire Hopkinson and Jini Stok

Congratulations to everyone on your hard work and success!

Working Capital Award Recipients:

Ballet Jorgen Canada, Kaeja d'Dance, Dancemakers, Théâtre Français de Toronto, Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People, Necessary Angel Theatre Company Soundstreams, Tafelmusik, Tarragon Theatre, Toronto Children's Chorus and Toronto Dance Theatre

Deficit Reduction Grant Recipients:

Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, Danny Grossman Dance Company, Elmer Iseler Singers, Opera Atelier, Nightwood Theatre and Theatre Direct Canada

We Outta Be In Pictures

As reported in the last edition of our newsletter we have been working with GJP Advertising in the creation of an awareness campaign. We were lucky enough to be on set for the film shoot of the TV commercial. While both of us have worked in the live performing arts world for some time we simply had no idea the amount of time and the number of people it takes to make a 30 second spot!

What was perhaps most gratifying was talking with the various technicians, actors and other staff on set and asking them what made them decide to volunteer their time and skills for Creative Trust. Almost everyone cited our member company list. When they saw the names of the companies we are working for everyone had at least one (or two or three or more) reasons to want to help out!

At our AGM on June 21st we were proud to unveil the fruits of everyone's labour to our member companies, board and donors. The TV spots have been running on City TV and their affiliates, such as Bravo! But if you haven't seen them yet you can go to www.creativetrust.ca and download them. We are also proud to announce a new partner in the Globe and Mail

who will be running our print ads this fall — keep an eye out!



Director Jamie Way gives notes to cast and crew

Many thanks to everyone from GJP who made the afternoon go off without a hitch: John, Beth, Cathy, Irene, Gerald and Susanna. As well as all those who donated their time, talents and locations:

Jamie Way and everyone at Millennium Pictures and Linoleum Group
Our talented and hilarious actors; Mary Kelly, Michael Mocdonis and Ostap Soroka
Stealing Time and Geoff Ashenburt
The Lab
Kodak
Eyes Post
Panavision

Fundraising Update

Creative Trust has achieved outstanding fundraising success so far, with 85% of the campaign goal achieved. This leaves only \$950,000 left to raise.

Many thanks to all of you — we'll be sure to keep you informed as the campaign unfolds. At this busy time every bit of support and encouragement.

CCCO launches new website

The Cultural Careers Council of Ontario has recently redesigned their website. The site still has the ever-popular job board but now has expanded the professional development area of

NEW AT CREATIVE TRUST *Cont. from p.2*

the site to include even more Human Resources for those working in the cultural sector.

Creative Trust will also be adding materials to our members area of the website courtesy of CCCO. Visit www.creativetrust.ca and the members area and look under Human Resources.

Board Speed-Dating: The Way To Meet And Match In The 21st Century?

On May 18th staff from 12 Creative Trust companies mingled with 30 Young Professionals from the Toronto Board of Trade in a bid to encourage their potential board or volunteer involvement in the arts. Planned in association with the Council for Business and the Arts, the five minute speed intervals were a fun way for young business professionals to survey a range of theatre, dance and music companies, enjoy mini-presentations, ask questions and get a sense of each company's artistic sensibility. The objective was for each participant and each arts group to come away with some promising new contacts and specific next steps. Stay tuned for a full progress report in our November newsletter.

Celebrate Mallory

On June 12 Tarragon Theatre hosted a fantastic tribute evening for Mallory Gilbert, featuring performances, tributes and a slide show that paid tribute to Mallory's 34 years at the helm of Tarragon.

Creative Trust was asked to create a four-minute tribute to Mallory. After much brainstorming we eventually came to the realization there is a reason Jini and I work in arts administration so we decided to bring in a pro. We introduced Donna Michelle St. Bernard to our readers two issues back as the Administrator for Native Earth Performing Arts. We also hinted at her performance pursuits outside of NEPA, and Donna certainly took the crowd

at the Celebrate Mallory event by storm. Here is an excerpt from the Mallory Rap commissioned by Creative Trust.

Mallory Gilbert, you got big shoes

I'm a size eleven and I couldn't follow you

What you know in your gut I could study for a lifetime

And still need to keep you on speed dial for a life-line

I don't want to have to reinvent the wheel

And you've had some ideas I would love to steal

So how can this work for both of us?

Dial it back to '98. Enter Creative Trust

It all started out at an Arts 4 Change meeting

Talking about the mid-sized and what they were needing

An idea was born. A problem solved.

I gotta say that I suspect there was some wine involved

Ha! You think you're gonna find some working capital?

Do you think that you can close this gap at all?

What a brave ambition. What a leap of faith

What a noble mission to undertake

How could Mallory have known what she was getting into?

You know she only signed up to keep an eye on you.

So Jini, Joan, Mallory, Claire

Braced themselves at the mouth of the funders' lair

Went valiantly forth in the name of the mid-sized

Raised our case in the face of the big guys

Made this pitch that was a little bit scary

Stood firm, though they called you "control freak" and "Mary"

*A seed amid weeds that was destined to fail
Grew up to a launch at the Princess of Wales*

Creative Trust Companies On the Road!

Summer is usually when we all take a chance to step back, recharge our batteries and take care of the little things we might have neglected during the busy times of our seasons (stacks of data entry maybe?). Well that certainly wasn't the case for some of the Creative Trust member companies this summer. Tafelmusik returned to Europe as orchestra-in-residence at the prominent Klang & Raum Festival in Irsee, Germany for its 14th year. Kicking off the summer with their sixth first place finish as Canada's leading children's choir in the CBC/Radio Canada 16th National Radio Competition for Amateur Choirs Toronto Children's Chorus then went on to tour Europe giving performances in Hungary, Slovakia and Austria, including Budapest, Vienna and Salzburg. Outreach company Cahoots Theatre Projects traveled to Hong Kong for the Hong Kong Fringe Festival and kept those of us back at home up to date on their experiences and adventures via their blog. <http://cahootstheatre.blogspot.com>

Upcoming Events

Creative Trust Celebration!

On Thursday November 2nd, 2006 Creative Trust will be celebrating the finale of our funding campaign with a special dedicated performance of Toronto Dance Theatre's Timecode Break at the Premiere Dance Theatre at Harbourfront Centre in Toronto. It will be an evening to celebrate the success of our fundraising with our supporters, donors and friends. We hope you will be able to join us. Please watch your mailboxes for your invitation.

Shana Hillman

Glowing Panel Illuminates Marketing Mysteries

At our Green Room session on August 28th, Allison Bottomley, Jonathan Bunce, Derrick Chua and John Farquhar led a dynamic conversation about how to market edgy new works, often still under development. We started with the premise that there are no hard and fast rules when marketing the new and the unknown. What is required is the kind of adventurous brainstorming that captures the essence of a project and evokes images and ideas that can be shaped into a cohesive marketing campaign.

So how does a producing company or a marketing team create that distinctive voice? How is a brand for new work formed and how does the company stick to it?

Allison Bottomley, Harbourfront Centre's Artistic Associate for the Performing Arts acts as the primary link between the artists creating projects at Harbourfront and the full marketing and

production staff. She spoke eloquently about balancing an organization's macro-identity with that of specific projects and programs.

Jonny Bunce is an artist and co-artistic director of The Music Gallery, which is enjoying a renaissance in programming and audiences. His access to cutting-edge music, language and cultural trends strongly influence the focused identity of the Music Gallery as well as other indie projects he produces.

Conversely, Derrick Chua knows about the flexibility required to market new works that have different audiences and focus. A successful producer of indie theatre and film, Derrick discussed the different targeting strategies he needs to develop for each and every production.

John Farquhar the creative director of Creative Trust's brilliant new ad campaign (created for

us by GJP Advertising) and one of Canada's hottest advertising pro's had no trouble relating his highly successful marketing principles to the challenges we face in the performing arts. He had clear ideas about what resonates, how to identify a product's dominant value and how to identify core audience or markets.

Here are a few salient points from the exchange:

🌀 What one message is most relevant and compelling to your audience? Who are you trying to attract? Clarify who wants to see the work plus who you want to there. Combined, they constitute your optimal audience. Discover the message you want to communicate and they want to hear; commit to the message and be consistent.

🌀 Unconventional works challenge our expectations of staging, time, place and narrative. Their marketing requires the same kind of immediacy,

Cont. from p.3

imagery, language and purpose to captivate the 'uninitiated' and lead them on a journey, starting at the box office.

🌀 Branding your company or series is essential – although a brand is just a promise which you must ultimately fulfill. There is no substitute for artistic excellence although occasional "failed experiments" are forgiven by an audience which supports the overall vision and spirit of a series or season.

🌀 With new work, "hip" has huge appeal. Youth are particularly good targets for hip new work and they are comfortable with new communications technologies. The web, email, text messaging, blogging, webcasting are all excellent

ways to attract and engage this group.

🌀 Artists who use new media and create experimental art forms are great audiences for your cutting edge work. Your work is part of their research into the 'New.' It's important to research and find the avenues where you can reach them, beyond your specific discipline or genre.

Panelists and Creative Trust members also shared some of their favourite marketing successes and failures, clearly illustrating the principles above. Everyone felt that the community of companies in Toronto should try to analyze the audience for new work in order to explore and find ways and incentives

to encourage cross pollination and sampling, such as "frequent goer" points.

Without a doubt marketing the "new" requires an audacious, pioneering approach. When it works it packs a punch, at times creating a furor, at others launching new cultural trends. In successfully developing our audiences for alternative work we inevitably broaden the palate and deepen the experience of general audiences for live performance who may first be tempted to leave their comfort zone by a single arresting image, a powerful message or an irresistible marketing challenge.

Rose Jacobson

Kendra Fry, General Manager, Cahoots Theatre *Cont. from p.1*

For the most part, Cahoots has seen a rise in its audience in the past two years. I suspect that this is mostly in response to new marketing initiatives and efforts to reach more diverse and broader audiences.

Cahoots has really switched its focus from ad purchases to online marketing and outreach. Our Metcalf Foundation grant has allowed us to pursue a program we call Sharing the Vision, where we reach our audiences via e-blasts, the website, blog articles, e-newsletters and various list serves and online chat rooms. Connecting directly provides more opportunity to express our message in depth. We're also giving the company and the individuals in it a recognizable identity. We try to make our materials engaging, quick, and either funny or somewhat controversial. We're consistently seeking a dialogue with our audience.

The major push for these innovations comes from our Artistic Director. Both Jovanni (Sy) and I prefer, whenever possible, to contextualize our work within the broader political and community landscape. The entire office including interns and volunteers are involved in outreach and marketing. We find that these conversations amongst the staff deepen the understanding of the project and the company, while providing us with a multiplicity of viewpoints.

As for the future, who knows? Who could have said that 10 years ago we'd be writing blogs on a weekly basis? We're still looking at podcasting and short online videos as opportunities yet to be explored.

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Shana Hillman, *Administrative and Program Coordinator*
Rose Jacobson, *Outreach Coordinator*

PARTICIPATING COMPANIES,

ROUND ONE
Ballet Jörgen Canada
Buddies in Bad Times Theatre
Dancemakers
Elmer Iseler Singers
Kaeja d'Dance
Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People

Opera Atelier
Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir
Tapestry New Opera Works
Théâtre français de Toronto
Toronto Dance Theatre

PARTICIPATING COMPANIES,

ROUND TWO
Danny Grossman Dance Company
Esprit Orchestra
Factory Theatre
Nathaniel Dett Chorale
Necessary Angel
Nightwood Theatre
Soundstreams
Tarragon Theatre
Theatre Direct
Theatre Passe Muraille
Toronto Children's Chorus

OUTREACH COMPANIES

b current
Ballet Creole

Cahoots Theatre Projects
Carlos Bulosan Culture Workshop
CanAsian Dance Festival
The Centre for Indigenous Theatre
Clay and Paper Theatre
COBA Collective Of Black Artists
Crow's Theatre
Dance Immersion
Ensemble Noir
Esmeralda Enrique Spanish Dance
Fujiwara Dance Inventions
Hannaford Street Silver Band
inDANCE (Hari Krishnan)
Little Pear Garden Collective
Menaka Thakkar Dance Company
Modern Times Stage Company
Muhtadi International Drumming Festival
Native Earth Performing Arts
Obsidian Theatre Company
Princess Productions (Yvonne Ng)
Red Sky Performance
The Theatre Centre
Tribal Crackling Wind (Peter Chin)

CREATIVE TRUST

We'd like to hear from you!

If you have any questions, need further information, or would like to make a contribution, please contact us, or visit our website.

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Centre for Social Innovation

Creative Trust is a founding tenant of the Centre for Social Innovation at 215 Spadina Avenue, a project of Margie Zeidler's Urbanspace Property Group with the Department of Canadian Heritage, Commons Group and D-Code, formed to catalyze, inform and support initiatives that advance the social, environmental and economic well-being of Canadians.

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