

TRUST

WORKING CAPITAL FOR THE ARTS

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Creative Trust's Founding Steering Committee members Joan Bosworth, Jini Stolk, Jane Marsland, Claire Hopkinson and Mallory Gilbert celebrate the first year of Working Capital for the Arts.

GET ON BOARD

One of the most important goals of Creative Trust's Working Capital program is helping arts leaders and their boards become more effective working partners. Arts organizations have always needed strong community partners to help them make and support their art, but they sometimes need help in developing the mutually supportive and satisfying relationships they need to move forward.

George Thorn and Nello McDaniel of Arts Action Research, our Lead Technical Associates, are recognized experts in this field. Their arts-centred approach has been at the heart of a number of roundtable discussions with participating Creative Trust companies. With Technical Assistance Director Jane Marsland's follow-up meetings with board and staff, Creative Trust is already having an impact.

AAR's starting point is obvious to anyone working in the field: in the arts, the professional leadership assumes responsibility and is largely held accountable for the organization. At the same time, serving on an arts board has become increasingly difficult as emphasis on governance increases, rather than reduces, confusion about a board's appropriate role. On each side of the table, people are trying to identify what roles and responsibilities are most appropriate, important and rewarding for board members.

A number of Creative Trust participants are exploring these questions and finding answers within their own companies. Layne Coleman (Artistic Director, Theatre Passe Muraille), Jim Le Francois (General Manager, Buddies in Bad Times Theatre) and Nancy Webster (General Manager) and Nadine Gilchrist (Chair, Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People) spoke of recent experiences with positive change with their boards.

At Passe Muraille, the biggest difference is coming from the clarity of artistic vision that is at the centre of Creative Trust's work. According to Layne Coleman, TPM's board now knows exactly what the company is, what's involved in being on the board, and how they can contribute. "Board members want to work with a clear vision artistically. When people don't feel confused or lost, they are able to give so much more – they see they can help, and understand that they have an enormous role to play."

The same is true at Buddies in Bad Times with its specific and unique queer-centred role and aesthetic. Jim Le Francois says, "Board members know what they're buying into, and can buy in passionately."

Nadine Gilchrist, newly appointed Chair of Lorraine Kimsa Theatre, points out that volunteering as a board member takes more commitment than expected. "You have to use your personal time, energy, and friends, transferring the belief you have in something you feel strongly about to others." Structural changes have helped successful board input at her theatre. Leadership is now divided between a President, with external responsibilities, and a Chair, who focuses on governance and running the meetings. Nancy Webster says that the result is a new collaborative spirit and better-structured board meetings. Topics are interesting and engaging, rather than a reiteration of bland reports or old news; the company is scheduling fewer, more effective, meetings. Layne, a 35-year veteran of Toronto's theatre scene, says he's never felt things "moving at this pace" at Passe Muraille. "Each board meeting moves the agenda forward." He and the staff feel supported at every level, even for risky programming, because "we are clear about the consequences if things don't go as well as planned." This sort of transparency comes from increased trust and mutual respect.

Lorraine Kimsa's board's most important role at the moment is fundraising, according to Nadine, because of the need to break even and remain within Creative Trust. Once through this current fundraising push, the board will focus on providing management with an objective sounding board to talk about issues and problems. At Buddies, the board is the company's most essential external link and advocate to stakeholders. Internally, the board has been cast to provide support for specific needs, either long range or day to day.

Everyone acknowledges the importance of Creative Trust's guidance. Jane helped Buddies "put our finger on why the board works. Our board is concerned with governance, but a renewed focus on their role as the company's external link has helped clarify their most important task." Nancy points to the "how to" board session with Creative Trust and an excellent follow-up meeting with Nello as motivating recent changes at Lorraine Kimsa. Nadine agrees. "We would never have thought of our new way of structuring the board without Creative Trust's involvement."

Nadine notes that running a board is about people and personalities: the challenge of being a board member is that there's no handbook. "Ten years ago, being on a board padded your resume, but many board members didn't want to get their hands dirty. These days, we need people who understand their role."

In each company the journey continues. Jane is now working with Buddies' President to figure out individual work plans for each board member. At LKTYP "The board seems to be engaged and there is an appetite for getting even better." The company is poised for a wonderful 40th anniversary year, according to Nadine. "We've made great strides, and although changes are still to come, it's been a real learning experience. We're still learning, trying to get our house in order, and be the best we can be at what we do."

AIMING HIGH: LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Earlier this summer I had the pleasure of attending the Professional Association of Canadian Theatre's annual conference, held this year in Banff. I was glad to have the opportunity to talk with colleagues and friends about Creative Trust, and to find out how participants in other sustainability initiatives across the country are faring. The good news is that companies who've been part of arts stabilization programs report that the lasting impact includes stronger finances, more stable management, and more productive and fulfilling relations between boards and

staff. The even better news is that Creative Trust's approach to sustainability is much admired, and we are being used as a model of successful capacity building in the arts.

Being surrounded by the stunning beauty of the Rocky Mountains encourages contemplation about the deeper meaning of what we do. Keynote speaker Bill Phipps talked of the transformational power of art, as an essential path to our knowledge of ourselves and the world we live in. Art, through storytelling, allows us to reach

into the heart, to recover and reconnect with the awe, mystery and wonder of life.

I came home inspired and recommitted to achieving our funding goal and – with your help – to assisting Toronto's most innovative performing arts companies to continue telling their own truths.

Jini Stolk



Sandra Pitblado, incoming Board President welcomes guests at Cantine Bistro and Bar.

CELEBRATING CREATIVE TRUST

Musical Fireworks at the Toronto Centre for the Arts

On April 12 Round One participant Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra hosted guests of Creative Trust at a concert and reception featuring Australian virtuoso violinist Elizabeth Wallfisch at the Toronto Centre for the Arts.

The evening was a wonderful opportunity to announce and celebrate our new Round Two companies, and to introduce Creative Trust to some new prospective supporters. It was a lovely event, and a magnificent concert. Many thanks to Tricia Baldwin for

her generosity in making the opportunity available, and to her wonderful staff for making the event such a pleasure to organize.

Comings and Goings

At our Annual General Meeting on May 25 the board of Creative Trust welcomed Sandra Pitblado as incoming President, and extended thanks to outgoing President Claire Hopkinson. Sandra is no stranger to the arts and not for profit community having demonstrated exemplary civic and philanthropic leadership. She and her husband Jim were honoured in 1999 with the NSFRE Outstanding Philanthropist Award, one of many awards they have received in recognition of their exceptional generosity and dedication to a variety of organizations, and were recently honoured at the Governor General's Awards with the Ramon John Hnatysyn Award for volunteerism in the performing arts.

Claire Hopkinson was one of the founding members of Creative Trust and has been a fantastic, thoughtful leader. We are thrilled that she will continue to bring her experience and generous spirit to the board in the role of Past President.

The board also sent thanks to Margaret Marshall and Tricia Baldwin who came to the end of their terms at the May 25, AGM. Both have made significant contributions to the development of Working Capital for the Arts.

We also have several new board members who have joined since our last issue. Welcome to Derek C. Hayes and Suzanne Weiss. Derek was Executive Vice President and General Counsel at the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce for many years, and at the law firm of Stikeman Elliott from 1999 to 2003. He is currently also on the board of directors of

the Mendelssohn Choir, the Cabinet for the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto, and the Canadian Centre for Ethics.

Suzanne comes to us from our Advisory Council; she also stepped in this year on our Admission Committee to select the Round Two Companies. Suzanne brings a wealth of experience from her tenure as the Managing Director of the Toronto International Film Festival and subsequent terms on the TIFF and Stratford Festival Boards.

Welcoming Summer and Toasting our AGM at the Cantine

Creative Trust welcomed incoming President Sandra Pitblado at our post AGM celebration at the Cantine Bistro and Bar on May 25. In the evening's informal formalities, cheers greeted the names of the 11 new companies admitted to the Working Capital for the Arts program and the 28 companies admitted as part of our Outreach Initiative. Funders, board members, friends and participants raised a glass to our first completed year of the program.

It was a wonderful evening, one of the first when it felt like summer was finally here to stay, and there was plenty of lively chatter that lasted well into the night.

Fundraising Update

Creative Trust's Working Capital for the Arts program is funded by a private and public partnership. We are pleased to announce that to date we have received 74% of our six-year funding target, which has come from three levels of government and many private foundations, corporations and individuals. We still need to raise an additional \$1.8 million to reach our goal and be able to bring the program to the full roster of 22 companies.

HATS OFF TO A SUCCESSFUL FIRST YEAR!

As part of our dedication to creating a program that can serve as a model for other communities interested in undertaking their own sustainability program we will be evaluating the progress of the companies and producing an annual evaluation report.

Our first such report focused on the first 11 companies admitted into the program, and the results were better than we could have hoped. This is incredibly encouraging to us for the future of the program and the results for the years to come. Feedback on the First Year Evaluation Report has been congratulatory and encouraging from our funders, partners and from staff at other sustainability programs across the country. You can download a PDF of the full report at: www.creativetrust.ca

Many thanks to Peter Brown our Program Development and Evaluation Director, for compiling results and writing the report, Sally Hennessy our Development Director for her feedback, and Judy Matthews, a member of our Advisory Council, for her detailed editorial comments from the perspective of a private funder.

But perhaps most of all thanks to our original 11 participating companies for the hard work and successes of the past year that we are so happy to report on, BRAVO!

Highlights

At the close of the first year, preliminary results show many achievements by the first eleven participating companies, including increased revenue generation and deficit elimination.

- Seven companies are now receiving matching deficit reduction grants or their first working capital awards.

- Total revenues of all eleven participating companies increased 6.3%, from \$14.9 million to \$15.9 million.

- Of the six companies that entered the program with accumulated deficits, total revenues increased 15%. These same companies reduced their combined deficits by 47%.

- All companies combined increased their private sector funding by 14.8% to \$3.9 million.

- As part of its mandate to increase the companies' effectiveness, Creative Trust sponsored two financial seminars and two all-company roundtable sessions.

- All of these achievements correspond to Creative Trust's original vision and goals.

Other Notable First Year Achievements

All participant companies have developed comprehensive Work Plans, for which appropriate revisions are underway for the second year.

Each participant company is working on or has completed revising and clarifying its artistic vision and mission statement.

Work Plans of six companies call for the articulation of specific plans for elimination of their accumulated deficits. These plans are all on track to being achieved within the program's time limits.

With the guidance of Creative Trust and the full participation of their boards, management and key staff, each participant company is working on or has completed a strategic plan.

With the assistance of Creative Trust, all participant companies are working on development of governance policies and formal board job descriptions with attention to clarifying boards' functions and relationships.

Three companies are developing comprehensive capital, usage and operational plans for the buildings they operate from and perform in.

Seven companies are working especially to develop revenues through market and audience development initiatives, community outreach and/or enhanced subscription bases.

Feedback from the Companies

"The matching deficit reduction challenge has been a very meaningful incentive to both board and staff. Staff have found the one-on-one sessions (with Creative Trust consultants) to be very helpful. They are helping us navigate some very delicate issues. The relationship of trust that has grown between staff and consultants is indeed remarkable, and I cannot imagine any other forum for us to be able to discuss these critical issues in such a manner of openness and discovery."

"This is having a tremendously positive impact in all departments. We have drawn ourselves out of the "day-to-day reactive mode" that stemmed from past crises, and are now more stable, calm and astute with our planning and projections."

On May 11th we held our inaugural Roundtable for the Outreach Initiative companies, led by George Thorn and Nello McDaniel along with the Creative Trust Team – Jini Stolk, Shana Hillman, Jane Marsland, Peter Brown, and myself. AAR's organic concepts and art-driven approach spoke eloquently to the artists, managers and board members in the room who are too often forced into organizational models which are irrelevant or inappropriate to the scale, scope and intent of their operations. The session took participants through AAR's Conceptual process - one that always begins by acknowledging all that is powerful, positive and right in our arts practices.

Continued on reverse »

Affirmation is key. Participants were introduced to a set of Beliefs and Values that were discussed and then applied in broad strokes to different aspects of organizational behavior. An overview of the relationships among board, staff, artists and audiences was offered, again through the prism of AAR's Beliefs and Values. At the end of the day a promising and workable image had begun to form; one which will carry the Outreach Initiative through a year-long process of working sessions, home 'assignments', individual company consultations and, in some cases, funding support to help companies implement aspects of what they have learned. The artistic process will remain at the core of all these endeavors.

The collective energy and intelligence in the room during the session was palpable as was an eagerness for engagement and knowledge. At its conclusion participants were issued an assignment connected to their Mission Statements which is to be completed in time for small group working sessions in June.

Since the Roundtable, Outreach participants also enjoyed a rigorous two-day Financial Seminar led by Heather Young with Peter Brown and special guest Sam Marinucci. Heather's approach effectively de-mystifies common financial challenges, offering instead a cogent set of principles and logic to help equip organizations with sound management skills. Copies of Heather's handbook, 'Finance for the Arts in Canada' were also available for purchase at a special Creative Trust rate.

Summer planning is in progress and a line-up of panels and workshops are under development for the fall/winter. Throughout we are committed to a dynamic process that builds relationships and recognizes diverse cultures, methods, successes and challenges at every step of the way.



Lead Technical Associate, George Thorn leading Roundtable for Outreach Participants.

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Peter Brown, Program Development and Evaluation Director
Jane Marsland, Technical Assistance Director
Nello McDaniel & George Thorn, Lead Technical Associates (Arts Action Research)
Rose Jacobson, Outreach Coordinator
Shana Hillman, Administrative Coordinator
Sally Hennessy, Development Director
Sarah Hennessy, Development Associate

PARTICIPATING COMPANIES, ROUND ONE

Ballet Jorgen 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
Carolos 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
Sampradaya Dance Creations
Theatre Asylum
The Theatre Centre
Tribal Crackling Wind (Peter Chin)

'CONCEPTS' ROUNDTABLE LAUNCHES NEW OUTREACH INITIATIVE

by Rose Jacobson

The values of diversity and inclusion have always been central to Creative Trust's mission. It was therefore with great excitement that I joined the Creative Trust Team in January as Project Manager of an initiative that has invited thirty small, diverse and 'indie' theatre, dance and music companies into the program to help build strong and stable support systems for their work.

Toronto is home to an extraordinary community of small professional companies who create cutting-edge work from a multitude of cultural and artistic perspectives. Each company invited into the program has demonstrated artistic vitality, clarity of vision and admirable efforts to develop and engage diverse audiences. What they urgently require are effective tools to secure, manage and sustain human resources, artistic growth and financial equilibrium. The prospect for learning and exchange within this consortium of groups is enormous and participants will also interface frequently with the mid-size companies in the Working Capital Program.

The 215 Centre for Social Innovation

Creative Trust is a founding tenant of the Centre for Social Innovation, 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.

Privacy policy

Communication is vital to the arts. Here at Creative Trust we aim to keep all of our friends and colleagues up to date on the news that is important to you. Please be assured that we respect your privacy and the confidentiality of your personal information. If you wish to be taken off our mailing list, please let us know.