



## Subject:

# Unleashing Ontario's Economic and Cultural Power: A Strategic Investment in Arts and Culture

Dear Premier Ford and Minister Cho,

As community and business leaders representing diverse sectors across Ontario—including major arts organizations, cultural institutions, and local creative enterprises—we write to strongly advocate for a vital, strategic investment in the Ontario Arts Council (OAC).

Ontario's arts and culture sector is not a peripheral "quality of life" feature—it is vital to economic infrastructure. In the recent **Arts Across Ontario Report**, the arts sector contributes **over \$26.4 billion to Ontario's GDP annually** and supports **over 270,000 jobs**, exceeding the combined employment of real estate, auto manufacturing, and forestry. It is time for the arts to be positioned not only as cultural assets but as **essential infrastructure drivers for our communities**, with a measurable economic impact across all eight regions of Ontario.

### OAC's Return on Investment is Clear

The OAC's current impact is undeniable:

- ✓ For every **\$1 that OAC invests, \$25 in total revenues** are generated by funded arts organizations, as detailed in the report.
  - ✓ Ontario's arts ecosystem already attracts **six times more private investment** than it receives in government grants.
  - ✓ OAC-funded organizations reach **31.1 million participants**.
  - ✓ **Economic Growth:** OAC-funded organizations generate over **\$1.1 billion in GDP**. They contribute **\$112 million** in provincial taxes and **16,164 full-time equivalent jobs** are directly created, impacting **75,000 jobs** provincially.
  - ✓ **Tourism & Local Business:** The **Arts Across Ontario Report** highlights that 27% of the total **\$11.4 billion** arts and culture visitor spending can be attributed to OAC grant recipients. Arts tourists stay longer and spend more. Festivals, performances, and galleries directly stimulate local economies and small businesses.
  - ✓ **Workforce Development & Innovation:** The arts foster creativity and innovation, making Ontario an attractive destination for talent and investment.
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It's time to recognize arts funding as “**cultural venture capital**”, seeding organizations that later yield substantial economic and social return.

This is a call to strategically invest in growing Ontario's small business ecosystem, increasing tourism revenue, and cementing our province's position as a magnet for talent and investment.

Investing in Ontario's arts sector is an investment in our shared future. A strong, vibrant arts community has individual, community, and social impacts that make our province stronger, prouder, more unified, and more resilient. It gives voice to diverse communities, builds bridges of understanding, and reinforces a sense of belonging and provincial identity for all Ontarians.

We urge your government to prioritize sustained and increased funding for the OAC. We ask the Premier to ensure arts and culture are built and supported regionally, with clear direction to the Minister and Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Gaming to make this a priority. The OAC is essential to this work.

With action, Ontario can lead—driving GDP growth, strengthening provincial identity, and future-proofing our economy.

The time is now to invest together with public funding leveraged to generate further private sector support. Please contact Aubrey Reeves, President and CEO of Business / Arts, on behalf of the undersigned, to arrange a conversation. She can be reached at 416-869-3016 ext 4224 or [aubrey@businessforthearts.org](mailto:aubrey@businessforthearts.org)

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Linda Miller

Chair, Board of Directors  
**Amabile Choirs of London,  
Canada**

Carolyn Mackenzie

Chair, Board of Directors  
**Carousel Players**

Betty Anne Younker

President, Board of Directors  
**London Symphonia**

Paula Gouveia

Chair, Board of Directors  
**Art Gallery of Sudbury**

Miao Zhang

Treasurer, Board of Directors  
**Essential Collective Theatre**

Douglas Knight C.M.

Chair, Board of Directors  
**Luminato Festival**

Melinda Munro

Chair, Board of Directors  
**Art Windsor-Essex**

Len Racioppo

Chair, Board of Directors  
**Factory Theatre**

Ginger Scott

Chair, Board of Directors  
**Media Arts Network  
of Ontario**

Robert J. Foster C.M.

Chair, Board of Directors  
**Business / Arts**

Mark Steinman

Chair, Board of Directors  
**FirstOntario Performing  
Arts Centre**

David Morneau

Chair, Board of Directors  
**Multicultural Theatre  
Space (MT Space)**

Andrea Stairs Krishnappa

Chair, Board of Directors  
**Canada's National  
Ballet School**

Jay Hodgson

Chair, Board of Directors  
**Forest City Gallery**

Sarah Padfield

Chair, Board of Directors  
**Museum London**

Neishaw Ali

Chair, Board of Directors  
**Canadian Film Centre**

Tenio Evangelista

President, Board of Directors  
**Harbourfront Centre**

Michael Bertrand

Chair, Board of Directors  
**Museum of Contemporary  
Art Toronto**

Marcia Lewis Brown

Chair, Board of Directors  
**Canadian Opera Company**

Janet Loo

Chair, Board of Directors  
**London Arts Council**

Valerie Douglas

President and Chair,  
Board of Directors  
**Music and Beyond  
Performing Arts**

Rags Davloor  
Chair, Board of Directors  
**National Ballet of Canada**

Robin Cardozo  
Chair, Board of Directors  
**Soulpepper Theatre**

Ian M.H. Joseph  
Chair, Board of Directors  
**The Shaw Festival**

Bill Stephenson  
Chair, Board of Directors  
**North York Arts**

Dana Lafarga  
Incoming Chair,  
Board of Directors  
**Soulpepper Theatre**

Annette Hamm  
Chair, Board of Directors  
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Vice Chairman  
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President and CEO  
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of Commerce**

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Chair, Board of Directors  
**TO Live**

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**Ontario Culture Days**

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**Toronto Biennial of Art**

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**The Burlington Performing  
Arts Centre**

Andrew Siegart  
President and CEO  
**Tourism Industry  
Association of Ontario**

Jacqueline Gauthier  
President, Board of Directors  
**Salon du livre du  
Grand Sudbury**

Timothy R. Price  
Chair, Board of Directors  
**The Royal Conservatory  
of Music**

Upkar Arora  
Chair, Board of Directors  
**Why Not Theatre**