



Connecting the Canadian Live Performing Arts Community

Réunir le milieu canadien des technologies scénographiques

The Honourable Navdeep Bains, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Innovation, Science, and Industry

The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Canadian Heritage

The Honourable Mélanie Joly, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Economic Development and Official
Languages

The Honourable Diane Lebouthillier, P.C., M.P.
Minister of National Revenue

The Honourable Maryam Monsef, P.C., M.P.
Minister for Women and Gender Equality and
Rural Economic Development

The Honourable Bill Morneau, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Finance

The Honourable Mary Ng, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion
and International Trade

The Honourable Carla Qualtrough, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Employment, Workforce
Development and Disability Inclusion

The Honourable Anthony Rota, M.P.
Speaker of the House of Commons
Chair Special Committee on the COVID-19
Pandemic

Via Email

June 15, 2020

Reference: Covid-19 and Canada's live performance industry

Dear Minister

The Canadian Institute for Theatre Technology/Institut canadien des technologies scénographiques (CITT/ICTS) is a national not-for-profit association that works for the betterment of the Canadian live performance community by supporting and representing all those who work behind the scenes, including: technicians, craftspeople, managers, designers, educators and students, freelance and gig workers, theatre consultants and architects, suppliers and manufacturers of related equipment and supplies.

We recognize and offer our sincere appreciation for the assistance that the Government of Canada has provided to arts and entertainment workers, organizations, and industry to date. Our Government has demonstrated an admirable understanding of the value of the live performance industry's contribution to the Canadian cultural fabric.

With the recommendations from Chief Medical Officers from across Canada to limit public gatherings, the live performance industry has seen unprecedented losses. Our industry was the first hit by this crisis and will likely be the last to emerge from its shadow. Virtually all of the people we represent are underemployed or unemployed. And, many of the corporations that support and supply the live performance industry are on the verge of bankruptcy. All of us would prefer getting back to work instead of relying on government support, but we also recognize that without a little help that might not happen.

In order to respond to this devastation, CITT/ICTS struck a working group from across Canada and representing a broad spectrum of stakeholders. Although everyone is eager to start producing, presenting and touring again they recognize that a quick return to "normal" is currently impossible and would be irresponsible. Their hope is that we can work together to ensure that Canada will still have a thriving live performance industry when this crisis ends.

Therefore, please consider the following recommendations:

Arts & Culture Sector - General emergency economic support

- Increase funding allocations to the Canada Council for the Arts and the Department of Canadian Heritage and through them to various Provincial arts bodies and industry associations. Support to Provincial and Territorial arts support organizations will allow those organizations to utilize their local expertise to allocate the additional funds to arts and culture groups; both in major centres and in our smaller cities and towns and in rural Canada.
- To encourage audiences to return to our theatres, amend the Income Tax Act on a temporary basis so that live performance ticket purchases are treated, as charitable donations for income tax purposes for 2020 and 2021.
- Devise and implement federal tax credit incentives for commercial live performance companies and businesses similar to the tax incentive policies that have given rise to record setting levels of film and television production across Canada.

Arts and Culture Sector – Support for workers

The Canadian live performance, touring and entertainment industries are at risk of losing an experienced and talented workforce. The exodus and loss of this expertise will jeopardize the recovery and future of the Canadian cultural sector.

- Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) eligibility requirements could be revised:
 - The universal \$2,000 monthly benefit does not contemplate regional differences in the cost of living and might be adjusted to better assist those living in more expensive regions
 - The duration of the CERB for live performance workers/artists needs to be extended to at least the end of 2020 or even 2021 given the fact that the recovery of the live performance industry will take at least that long.

Arts and Culture Sector – Support for employers and businesses

Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS)

- Live performance employers should be able to claim the 75% wage subsidy for all their workers including, full-time, part-time, contract and/or seasonal whether employees or self-employed.
- However, employers should be eligible to receive the wage subsidy only if they do not lay off staff or terminate contracts for self-employed workers/artists.
- The duration of the CEWS for live performance employers needs to be extended to at least until the end of 2020
- It is our understanding that Public institutions are not eligible for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy. This includes municipalities and local governments, Crown corporations, public universities, colleges and schools, and hospitals. We therefore ask for the inclusion of public universities, colleges and schools, municipally and provincially run venues in the CEWS or the commitment of separate funds earmarked exclusively to assist in the recovery for municipal, provincial and university run venues.

Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) eligibility requirements should be revisited and revised as follows:

- The duration of the CECRA needs to be extended for live performance employers, and those businesses engaged in the supply of goods and services to the live performance industry, until such time as large gatherings are once again permitted.

Consider a *Business Reactivation Fund* targeting the businesses and venues that are necessary for the restoration of the live performance industry and indirectly Canada's tourism industry.

Arts and Culture Sector – Venues (theatres, concert halls, convention centres and more)

- Implement funding increases to the Department of Canadian Heritage, Infrastructure Canada and other programmes that will facilitate the development of, or completion of, capital projects in live performance venues. This will stimulate economic activity in the construction industry and the theatre supply sector, and provide employment for venue technical staff.
- Work with all arts and culture stakeholders and all levels of provincial, territorial and municipal government to design and implement appropriate public health protocols that will provide an environment for the safe return of workers/artists and audiences to the various arts and culture venues.
- Identify and implement longer-term financial assistance initiatives that recognize the recovery of the live performance industry will take much longer than any other industry.

Arts and Culture Sector - Innovation

- Implement funding programmes that support the introduction of digital technologies and accompanying training to Universities and Colleges that offer training to performing artists and technicians.
- Implement funding programmes that support the introduction of digital technologies and accompanying training to venues that can develop “live” broadcast of performances during the pandemic.
- We can, with a little financial help, assist governments in developing and testing technologies that will make our venues safe for our audiences.
- We invite governments, at all levels, to partner with industry stakeholders to find ways to adapt to the “new normal”.

Arts and Culture Sector - National Marketing Campaign to Rediscover & Support the Arts

- Work with all arts and culture stakeholders to design, implement and fund a national marketing campaign aimed at encouraging Canadians to return to the various arts and culture venues as patrons and audiences.
- As part of any marketing campaign, allocate funding to Provincial and Municipal organizations to enable them to use their expertise to design and implement more focused localized campaigns collaboratively with stakeholders.

We appreciate the swift and on-going efforts of the Government of Canada to address the immediate financial hardships across all sectors associated with this pandemic, and we are hopeful that the gaps identified in this letter can be addressed to help find a way forward so that nobody working in the live performance industry is left behind.

Yours sincerely,

The Board of Directors of the Canadian Institute for Theatre Technology/Institut canadien des technologies scénographiques

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