

Canadian Alliance of Dance Artists – Ontario Chapter

Strategic Plan

2013/14 – 2015/16

Mission Statement

The Canadian Alliance of Dance Artists – Ontario Chapter (CADA-ON) is a not-for-profit organization that empowers and educates its membership of individual dance artists towards the use of best practices within an evolving sector.

Introduction

The Canadian Alliance of Dance Artists – Ontario Chapter (CADA-ON) is a professional association for dance artists, founded and directed by dance artists. Created in 1986 (and incorporated in 1995), in response to impending federal and provincial arts policies, CADA-ON has spent the last 27 years directly addressing issues related to the status of the artist in Ontario, and in Canada. *Our goal is to empower and educate our members towards self-representation.*

The professional life of a dance artist is multifaceted, and often extends beyond the performance stage. The CADA-ON model reflects a holistic dance community in which artists' roles are fluid — many of our members act as dancers, choreographers, teachers, rehearsal directors, and administrators. The vast majority of our members are self-employed. With a reported annual income well below the national average, many dance artists are struggling to make ends meet, even while pursuing a fruitful career in dance. Most dance artists often work in multiple settings, in varying roles and conditions, in an increasingly national and international context. As increasing numbers of dance artists seek parallel careers to supplement and support their dance pursuits, the act of balancing time, space, continued training, and funding presents an ongoing challenge. CADA-ON's programs and services assist dance artists with these challenges.

CADA-ON first published its **Professional Standards for Dance (PSD)** in 2003, with the latest version (V3) printed and distributed in 2011. The PSD is a best practices guide that promotes and supports professional standards for payment and conditions of work in dance. It is a living document that responds to the ever-changing sector and provides basic guidelines for negotiating work agreements. The PSD suggests minimum standards for hours of work, fees, and working environment. It also outlines the rights and responsibilities of the individual dancer. The PSD's recommendations have become a benchmark in the dance community, and the document is referred to by numerous dance companies as well as granting bodies on all three levels – municipal, provincial and federal.

Established in 2002, the **Training Subsidy Program (TSP)** recognizes dance artists' needs for ongoing training and professional development. It offers professional and emerging artist members up to \$325 per membership year towards any physical training within Canada. The TSP enables our members to maintain their bodies as instruments, so that they are able to engage their minds as interpreters and creators, and remain active and employable members of the dance community. Since the program's inception, CADA-ON has distributed \$346,181.64 in training subsidies to its membership of dance artists.

Our **Professional Discounts** program facilitates discounted rates for members at yoga and dance studios, for transportation, and for health services. Most notably, CADA-ON initiated the practice of asking companies and presenters to set discounted member ticket prices for dance performances. Since 1994, the "CADA" rate has become a common offering to the dance community, now extending beyond the stage into workshops, classes, and support services.

<<<Our first founding corporate object was, “*the improvement of the financial status and the physical and social working conditions of independent and company affiliated dance artists in Canada*” (Ontario Letters Patent, January 1995)>>>

CADA-ON is committed to fostering an on-going dialogue within many areas of the dance community. Our organizational structure and core services continue to evolve as we respond to the developing needs and voices of a hugely diverse and rich art form. We see our principles, policies, and programs in a community-building context, and we believe that all parties in the milieu have a shared interest in building a strong dance community. Our current partnerships include a joint membership with the Canadian Dance Assembly, and advocacy for status of the artist issues with the PASO (Provincial Arts Service Organizations) Coalition and the Canadian Arts Coalition. We actively seek out collaborate partnerships with other provincial and national arts service organizations, contributing our specialized voice towards any goal that might help improve the socio-economic situation of the individual dance artist.

As we move forward in 2013-14/ 2015-16, CADA-ON will remain strong in its continued commitment to its founding values and goals.

History

1986

Dance Ontario, along with Pat Fraser, Maxine Heppner and Marie-Josée Chartier, meet to assess the needs of the independent dance artist.

1988

A steering committee of the Canadian Alliance of Dance Artists (CADA) is formed with the encouragement of Joysanne Sidimus, founder and Executive Director of the Dancer Transition Resource Centre (DTRC), to participate in undertakings of the Federal Status of the Artist Committee.

1990

A series of community meetings establishes the Ontario Chapter for the organization, and it elects its first Board of Directors.

1991

CADA-ON representatives participate in provincial Status of the Artist legislation discussions.

1992

CADA-ON provides support to dance artists in British Columbia who establish CADA/BC (now CADA West).

1994

Offers first professional discounts for members. Contracts first paid, part-time administrative support.

1995

CADA-ON incorporates without share capital in the Province of Ontario, publishes Letters of Agreement templates for performance, rehearsal and teaching contracts, and offers group accident insurance coverage.

1996

With The Canadian Association of Professional Dance Organizations (CAPDO), participates in hearings with the Canadian Artists and Professional Relations Tribunal regarding certification of professional associations to represent dance artists.

2002

Implements the Training Subsidy Program (TSP).

2003

Membership doubles. Professional Standards for Dance (PSD) Version 1 published after ten years in development.

2007

Launches joint website with CADA/BC. Moves into its first office space.

2008

Receives three-year funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) and hires its first Executive Director. Moves into full-time office space at the Centre for Social Innovation. Develops its first Strategic Plan 2008/09-2010/11. Delivers first conference in conjunction with the Annual General Meeting as the part of new Professional Development program. Establishes joint membership with Canadian Dance Assembly (CDA).

2009

Publishes PSD Version 2. Develops, prints, and distributes Membership Handbook. Begins to deliver membership e-News. Develops its own website, separate from CADA/BC. Completes first audited annual financial statements. Joins and becomes active in the Provincial Arts Service Organization Coalition (PASO).

2010

With the aid of a consultant, conducts the Ontario Dance Sector Study, in partnership with Dance Ontario. Participates in On the Move conferences and conducts school visits for membership recruitment. Various arts councils across the country begin to recognize and reference the PSD's minimum fee standards.

2011

Publishes PSD Version 3. Leads the development and implementation of the Arts Workers Health Insurance Plan, in partnership with ten other provincial arts service organizations: Artist Run Centres and Collectives of Ontario, Canadian Artists' Representation/le Front des artistes canadiens (CARFAC) Ontario, Canadian League of Canadian Composers, Canadian Music Centre - Ontario Region, Choirs Ontario, Community Arts Ontario, Cultural Careers Council of Ontario, Dance Ontario, Dance Umbrella of Ontario, and the Ontario Council of Folk Festivals. Develops its second Strategic Plan 2011/12-2013/14. Moves into a shared office space with the Dance Umbrella of Ontario.

2012

Leads research for the Microfinance for Artists Project, in partnership with Canadian Music Centre - Ontario Region, CARFAC Ontario, Dance Ontario, and the Ontario Crafts Council. Successfully transitions to a new part-time administrative staff model.

2013

With the aid of a consultant, begins community consultations with urban dance and African diaspora dance communities. Develops, scripts, and films five short videos for CADA-ON promotional and educational needs.

Key Achievements

CADA-ON has made enormous strides in its work to improve the socio-economic status of the dance artist in Ontario and in Canada at large. The last three years have seen an increased amount of activity, fueling the growth of the organization and our efforts to provide meaningful programs and services to our members.

Highlights from our last three years:

Membership:

Our membership continues to grow and diversify. By the end of 2012/13, 219 professional dance artists, emerging dance artists, and dance supporters joined CADA-ON, more than ever before, with 27% of our members hailing from outside of Toronto. CADA-ON truly reflects the multicultural landscape of Ontario, with 48% of our members self-identifying as working in a culturally-specific dance form.

Professional Standards for Dance:

In 2011, we published the third edition of the Professional Standards for Dance, and distributed printed copies to our members, as well as arts organizations and government funding agencies. Since the minimum fee standard of \$20/hour in our first edition (2003) to the most recent \$26/hour, we have witnessed the “real world” hourly rates for dancers rise to meet these standards. Our recommended rates have become the benchmark for the dance community, and the document has become an important reference tool in advocating for fairness and equity. (At the time of writing this strategic document, plans are already underway for an online version of the PSD V3 document. This update will improve access to this valuable information for all of our members and the dance community-at-large.)

Training Subsidy Program:

The Training Subsidy Program continues to attract more and more users, and we have now reached our goal of having 60% of eligible members accessing the program. In 2012/13, over \$22,512 was reimbursed to artists for their physical training activities in Canada, with total artist spending reported at over \$58,996.

Professional Discounts:

We have continued to develop our Professional Discounts program by adding new partnerships with Moksha Yoga, Barreworks, and Elumena Health Clinics.

Partnerships:

Our joint membership with the Canadian Dance Assembly has continued, adding our members’ voices at the national platform for dance advocacy. Through the CDA, there is now access to the ACTRA Fraternal Arts & Entertainment Health Insurance Plan for all CADA-ON members. We have also recently joined the Canadian Arts Coalition, and we maintain working relationships with the Canadian Dance Assembly, Cultural Careers Council of Ontario, Cultural Human Resource Council, Community Arts Ontario, and the PASO Coalition.

Microfinance for Artists Project:

CADA-ON spearheaded the Microfinance for Artists Project, a major study into alternative funding models for artists in Ontario. With a coalition of three other provincial arts service organizations (as listed above), CADA-ON led the research for this project and developed a report on the findings.

The Arts Workers Health Insurance Program (AWHIP):

Along with Canadian Artists' Representation/le Front des Artistes Canadiens (CARFAC) and nine other arts service organizations (as listed above), CADA-ON led the research and development of the Arts Workers Health Insurance Program (AWHIP). Although AWHIP ran for only one year (due to lack of enrollment all across the partner organizations), its implementation was a major accomplishment for CADA-ON. Following our lead, AWHIP provided members of many provincial arts service organizations with the most affordable artists’ health insurance option known to date.

Rebranding Project:

Preliminary work on our rebranding project has already begun and will continue in the next three years. This includes the design of a new logo, the launch of a brand new website with easier navigation and faster accessibility, and the completion and dissemination of a new promotional video. CADA-ON has also begun to create and implement its new social media strategy, which includes a new Twitter account and a new webpage on our website for the promotion of CADA-ON affiliated shows.

Community Consultations:

Our community consultations with the urban dance and the African diaspora dance communities were completed in 2013 and we are continuing to integrate the valuable information garnered into our services and programs. For too long, CADA-ON has simply reached out into various communities, presented its programs and services, and waited for new members to arrive on our doorstep. These consultations mark a concerted shift in our approach, by seeking first to understand the needs of each unique community of dance artists and then to integrate feedback and suggestions into our programming. Our goal is to identify and employ ways to approach our communications with inclusivity, and to recognize the ways in which different dance forms practice and train for their craft.

Strategy Statement

A look at the history of CADA-ON reveals a continued commitment to improving conditions for the individual dance artist in Ontario with the development of innovative programs to service its membership and the national dance community-at-large. At this point in the organization's history we have begun a process of re-evaluation and self-reflection that has seen us returning to our founding values. We have taken time to reflect on our past, to fully understand and appreciate how far we have come and recognize what we have accomplished, in order to see where we need to go next. Moving forward, we envision CADA-ON as a catalyst for resource sharing and as a conduit for information in the dance community.

The organization has grown steadily since its inception with an accelerated breadth of activity in the last five years. Over the next three years (2013/14 – 2015/16) we intend to further the steady, continued growth of the organization in all areas – administratively, and in our programs and services. Our proposed methodology and approach is ambitious in its scope, though thoughtful and measured in planning, execution, and delivery.

Goals***1. Continue to deliver and enhance our existing programs and services***

The strength of CADA-ON rests in the programs and services that we offer, and it is our duty to continue to deliver them with clarity, equity, and in responsiveness to our membership.

2. Continue towards inclusivity of Ontario's multicultural and geographical richness

As Ontario continues to become more multicultural, it is our responsibility to reflect this in our membership. We must also recognize other emerging Ontario centres for dance (outside of Toronto) and ensure that our programs and services reach these communities, as well as communities throughout Canada.

3. Diversify and maximize funding resources

CADA-ON is grateful to all of its funders and supporters. We will further define and clarify our message and vision to all of our stakeholders, to maximize our current relationships and continue to search for new sources of funding.

4. Deepen our current partnerships and explore new pathways

We believe that collaboration is key to the success and growth of the arts in Canada. We will continue to add our voice to the current dialogue, and begin new conversations with other arts service organizations, for the benefit of our membership and the field, as a whole.

5. Improve our online presence and connectivity

As we continue to grow as an organization, we must invest in new ways to reach dance artists – our current members, and those that have yet to join. Our investment in new technology will bolster our efforts in other key areas of our work in the next three years.

6. Develop concise plans and improvements in all areas of operation

Our organization is sustainable only if we develop and implement clear plans to weather staff and board successions, as well as financial strains or shortfalls. Our operational model must evolve as the dance sector continues to do so.

7. Respond to the field by developing new projects

A hallmark of CADA-ON's history is our ability to act as a “first responder” to the needs of the individual dance artist in Ontario. We will continue to respond to our members by making innovative choices and taking strategic risks.

Action Plan

Please see attached Excel document.

Conclusion

The Canadian Alliance of Dance Artists – Ontario Chapter (CADA-ON) advocates for and leads continued change and growth in the dance community. As active participants in the dance milieu, we believe it is important to continue to focus on issues regarding the lives and working conditions of professional dance artists. Accordingly, it is the intention of the board of directors to pursue the above seven goals to continue to further the aims of CADA-ON over the next three years. We are committed to evaluating our progress annually, using this document as our guide.

This document was prepared by Michael Caldwell and Brodie Stevenson in consultation with Jennifer Dallas and Andrea Roberts.