



Arts Connect – May 2015

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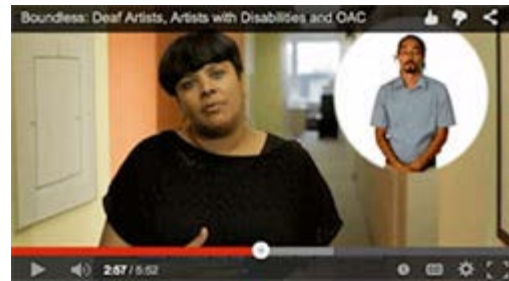
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OAC's new strategic plan, *Vital Arts and Public Value*. [Watch the video](#)



Watch [*Boundless : Deaf Artists, Artists with Disabilities and OAC*](#) to learn about the experiences of Deaf artists and artists with disabilities who have applied for grants or participated in juries.

RECENT RESULTS

Grant results are mailed once decisions are made, approximately four months after the deadline. They are posted on the OAC website one month after that, listed by deadline date. [Click here for a listing of grant recipients](#)

DATES TO REMEMBER

[Upcoming program deadlines](#)

- Please note that **September 15, 2015**, is the new deadline for the ***Deaf and Disability Arts Projects*** program. Guidelines and application form to be posted in early May.
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Participants in discussion during a group working session at the Community Engagement in Dance workshop, hosted by OAC and Ontario Presents, as part of the Ontario Dances program. (Photo: Pat Bradley)

OAC PODCASTING

Learn about OAC programs and activities on the go!
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NEWS

In the Wings: Message from Peter Caldwell, Director & CEO, on Board News, Videos and OAC's Move to a New Office in January 2016

Dear Friends,

First and foremost, I'd like to take this opportunity to acknowledge **Martha Durdin**, whose unprecedented three terms as Chair of the Ontario Arts Council concluded on February 9, 2015. For all of us at OAC, board and staff, it has been a tremendous privilege to work with Martha over the past decade – she is an inspirational leader who cares deeply about Ontario's artists and arts organizations.

My congratulations also to board member **Judith Gelber**, who was appointed Vice-Chair on March 4. Judith will helm the board until a new Chair is appointed by the Government of Ontario later this year. And I would like to acknowledge and thank **Albert Alexanian**, our board member from Hamilton, whose second three-year term ended on February 4.

Following my last e-newsletter message, in late December, we were able to tape the presentation that Carolyn Vesely and I gave about OAC's new strategic plan, **Vital Arts and Public Value**, during our fall 2014 tour of Ontario. Opting for a video recording, rather than a webinar, allowed us to provide a version with French subtitles as well as an American Sign Language (ASL) version. I confess that the final result isn't the most exciting video I have ever watched, but for anyone who was unable to attend one of our 18 community meetings, it contains very useful information. It's also a good way to hear our complete message about the new multi-year strategic plan first-hand, as well as the reasons for our 2015-16 funding framework, which includes five per cent across-the-board reductions to all project program funding envelopes and all operating grants.

One of the recurring questions we received on tour was the use of the term “vital” in our new strategic plan. As Carolyn and I pointed out at every opportunity, this does *not* signal a change in what OAC considers important or a change in our assessment processes. Instead, the notion of “vitality” – and the accompanying concepts of artistic merit, relevance, impact, risk-taking and effectiveness – is a tool that will help us assess and compare all grant applications and guide us in making difficult decisions in the years ahead. For example, when our peer assessors have to choose between projects that are competing for the same funds, the ones that are considered the most vital will be funded.

I would particularly like to reassure organizations that receive OAC operating funding that we do not equate vitality with “newness” and, indeed, some of Ontario’s *most* vital arts organizations aren’t new at all. Over the years, the groups that are most successful have worked hard to remain relevant to their audiences and respond to the ever-changing needs of the arts community and the public – including demographics and technology.

This leads to another issue that came up in some of our community meetings: the question of “risk-taking,” which our strategic plan includes as one element of vitality. We believe that it’s impossible to evolve and thrive without taking risks – growing, pushing the boundaries, trying new things. But risk-taking is all about context. In some cases, it might have to do with an organization’s programming decisions, but it could just as easily mean new marketing initiatives, new types of fundraising, reaching out to new audiences and promoting increased collaboration and cooperation as resources become more scarce and competition for people’s time and attention becomes more fierce. That said, we know that risk-taking often doesn’t pay off immediately, and sometimes it means trying again and again, using different approaches. But we hope that it is always a learning experience for Ontario’s artists and arts organizations.

With our new strategic plan, Ontario Arts Council now has six priority groups: Aboriginal artists, artists and arts organizations in regions across Ontario, artists of colour, Deaf artists and artists with disabilities, francophone artists and new generation artists. OAC remains strongly committed to supporting artists from *all* communities and to funding vital arts created and produced by *all* Ontarians. Our programs cover a wide range of artistic practices and serve the needs of professional artists, regardless of background.

New video and program for Deaf and Disability Arts launched

On February 6, 2015, we released our new video [*Boundless: Deaf Artists, Artists with Disabilities and OAC*](#).

Unfortunately we have encountered some technical difficulties with the program guidelines and application forms for our new **Deaf and Disability Arts Projects** program. We hope they will be posted in early May. As a result, we are delaying the program deadline until September 15, 2015, to give people more time to prepare their applications.

In addition to this new program, we offer **support for the costs to prepare applications** and **support for accessibility costs for funded projects**.
Search for a new Francophone Arts Officer

We have renewed the search for a new Francophone Arts Officer and hope to announce the successful candidate later this spring.

Move preview

After more than 50 years at 151 Bloor Street West, Toronto, OAC will be moving to new offices in early 2016. The move is partially in response to rising rental rates (our current lease is based on rates negotiated in 1994) and the need to cut operating costs by reducing our real estate footprint. It is also driven by a desire to move to more efficient and collaborative ways of working. A new open office system, in combination with **Nova**, the online grant application and management system currently in development, will significantly change the way that OAC works in the months ahead. Stay tuned!

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Judith Gelber Appointed Vice-Chair, and Martha Durdin Concludes Three Terms as OAC Chair

Judith Gelber has been appointed Vice-Chair of the Ontario Arts Council (OAC), while **Martha Durdin**, OAC's longest serving Chair, recently completed her third three-year term in February. As Vice-Chair, Judith will helm OAC's board of directors until a new Chair is named by an Order in Council through the Government of Ontario's public appointments

process.

About Judith Gelber

Judith Gelber was appointed to OAC's board of directors in February 2013. She also currently sits on the board of the Ontario Arts Foundation. Judith has volunteered extensively with the arts community, including serving as Chair of the board for Canada's National Ballet School (2008-2010), and previously as Chair of the National Ballet School Foundation. Her long-standing commitment to the arts includes work as a Steering Committee member for the Canadian Arts Summit, and as Vice-Chair of the Art of Time Ensemble. Previously, Judith Gelber was a board member of Toronto's Tarragon Theatre and the Community Arts Council of Vancouver. [Read more](#)



About Martha Durdin

Martha Durdin was appointed to the board of directors of OAC in July 2004, named Vice-Chair in 2005, Chair in 2006, and renewed as Chair twice. Prior to OAC, she served as a board member with Opera Atelier, Business for the Arts and Factory Theatre. Currently she is Vice-Chair of the board at the Royal Ontario Museum, and a board member of the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund and The Writers' Trust of Canada. Other community activities include work with Casey House and Homes First Foundation.



Under Martha Durdin's leadership, the government of Ontario's annual funding of the arts, through OAC, increased by \$20 million to its current **\$60 million** allocation which last year supported more than **3,000** project grants for artists and arts groups and operating grants to **552** organizations. As a result, OAC was able to launch or support numerous new initiatives. These included (in chronological order): the Access and Career Development program (2006); Northern Arts program (2006); Ontario Dances (2008); Aboriginal and Culturally Diverse Dance Training (2008); National and International Touring (2009); National and International Residency (2009); Aboriginal Curatorial Projects (2009); Artists in Residence (Health) (2010); Ontario Culture Days

(2010); Ontario Arts Council Aboriginal Arts Award (2012); Aboriginal Presenters in the North – Music Events (2012); Cultural Animators program (2012); Theatre Connects (2013); and Deaf and Disability Arts Projects (2015). Martha is currently President and CEO of Credit Union Central of Canada.

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Peter Caldwell, Director & CEO, reappointed for five more years

In February, we announced the re-appointment of **Peter Caldwell** as **Director & CEO** of the Ontario Arts Council for the next five years. Since joining OAC as Director & CEO on February 6, 2012, Peter has guided and overseen activities related to OAC's 50th anniversary, creation of an equity plan, the development of OAC's new online grant application and management system (Nova project), the negotiation of a first collective agreement with staff, which has just been ratified, and the development of a comprehensive space plan. In early 2016, OAC will be moving into new offices to modernize its operations and reduce its real estate footprint. These several large projects are all converging, and will collectively transform OAC's operations in the years ahead.



Peter Caldwell has spent his entire career working in the arts. Prior to joining OAC, he was Vice-President, Finance & Administration at OCAD University (formerly Ontario College of Art & Design), Executive Director of the Arts Foundation of Greater Toronto, Program Director at the Toronto Theatre Alliance, Theatre Consultant at the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation, and Coordinator of Training Programs at Theatre Ontario. Peter's volunteer work has included the Boards of Directors of the Laidlaw Foundation, Toronto Artscape, Design Exchange, Performing Arts Development Fund of Toronto, and Platform 9 Theatre. He has also served on the major grants review panel for the City of Toronto's

Cultural Affairs Division. Peter holds an MBA from the Richard Ivey School of Business at University of Western Ontario.

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OAC's Cultural Animator Pilot Project Has Moved to Mississauga

Sharada K. Eswar is the newest Cultural Animator contracted to help support the development of community-engaged arts projects. Working with the Mississauga Arts Council, Sharada is raising awareness about OAC's [Artists in the Community/Workplace](#) program and is guiding artists and organizations through the grant application process.



Sharada is an accomplished storyteller, writer and singer who teaches and performs locally and internationally, drawing on her South Asian heritage. She is an experienced practitioner of community-engaged arts and a cultural consultant whose capacity to connect diverse communities through the arts has been widely recognized by a range of arts organizations and cultural institutions.

About the Cultural Animator pilot project

The Cultural Animator pilot is intended to increase community-engaged arts practice and partnerships between arts communities and other sectors, such as social services, health, tourism and business. Community arts councils provide important services to artists and arts organizations and are a valuable resource in their communities. Through this partnership with selected regional arts councils, OAC hopes to widen the reach and strengthen the impact of community arts. The initiative is in its second year in Kingston and completed a two-year presence in Windsor in fall 2013.

About the Artists in the Community/Workplace program

The Artists in the Community/Workplace program encourages artists and arts organizations from all arts disciplines to develop new artistic works with people and communities outside of the arts sector using collaborative co-creative processes. Grants are designed to integrate the arts into

community life through artistic projects.

[Listen to a podcast](#) that defines community-engaged, collaborative artistic projects and how the Artists in the Community/Workplace program supports this work.

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Results from the Canada Council for the Arts and Ontario Arts Council National Dance Survey

Last year, the [Canada Council for the Arts](#), with support from the [Ontario Arts Council](#), conducted the nation-wide **#YesIdance** survey with dancers, choreographers and dance teachers across the country. *The Yes I Dance survey was part of **Dance Across Canada**, a major research project^{to} get a clearer profile of Canada's full dance ecosystem and its social and economic impacts. Over 8,100 people responded, representing 190 forms of dance.*

Survey results revealed

- Spin the [Dance Wheel](#) for stats, facts and videos of the survey's top 100 dance forms
- [Read the highlights](#) in the executive summary or the full report

Share the power of dance

We want Canadians to know why you love to dance. There are many ways to engage:

- share your dance video
- put your organization on the largest [dance map](#) in the world
- tell us why dance is important to you on [Twitter](#)

#YesIdance

The Yes I Dance survey is part of [Dance Across Canada](#), a major research project funded by the Canada Council with financial contributions from the Ontario Arts Council.



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Ontario Culture Days Now an Incorporated Not-for-Profit

After five years as a collaborative project of the provincial arts and culture sector, Ontario Culture Days (OCD) has incorporated as a not-for-profit organization. This transition is bolstered by a two-year commitment of funds from the [Ontario Trillium Foundation](#), aimed at building OCD's infrastructure and organizational capacity so that OCD can become a more effective catalyst for arts and cultural engagement across Ontario.

Culture Days information sessions across Ontario

Ontario Culture Days has kick-started [registration](#) and planning for the sixth annual Culture Days with more than 20 in-person [information sessions](#), taking place from mid-April to early June. On September 25, 26 and 27, **Culture Days** invites people to **create, participate and share** in arts and culture in every community across the country. Artists, professional and volunteer-run cultural groups, and anyone else wishing to organize an activity is invited to attend a session to learn about tools, tips and resources for participation. No session near you? Register for one of four [webinars](#).

Last year Culture Days celebrated its fifth anniversary with more than **500,000** Ontarians participating in over **1,650 activities**. In 2014, **1,050** Ontario artists, cultural organizations and community groups volunteered, sharing their love of culture with an enthusiastic public in **172** cities and towns. With **more than 90 per cent** of Culture Days activity organizers and participants planning to return again in 2015, Culture Days is an important cultural event across the province.

For more details about Ontario Culture Days please visit www.on.culturedays.ca. Connect with us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).

Ontario Culture Days is supported by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Ontario Arts Council and the Government of Ontario in recognition of Celebrate the Artist Weekend.

For more information about Ontario Culture Days

please contact:

Aubrey Reeves

Executive Director

(416) 646-7469

Toll-free (outside of GTA) 1-800-387-0058 ext. 7469

aubreyreeves@culturedays.ca



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Coming Soon! Webinars for Artists and Arts Organizations Working in Schools and Community Settings

In the following months, we will host a series of one-hour webinars featuring innovators and arts practitioners who will share their expertise on a range of topics. Plan to take an hour out of your day at home or the office to listen live. Details of our webinar series will be distributed by email and posted on our website and social media channels as soon as they are available.

Some possible webinar topics:

- How to share stories about your project's impact on learners within your community and beyond
- Turning STEM into STEAM: integrating the arts with science, technology, engineering and math
- Bringing an equity lens to arts education
- Learning about new initiatives within your local school boards

Learn more about [Arts Education](#) programs.

ARTS NOTES

OAC-Funded Juno Award Winners and Nominees

Congratulations to the following Juno award winners!

JAZZ ALBUM OF THE YEAR: GROUP

- Jane Bunnett and Maqueque for *Jane Bunnett and Maqueque*

WORLD MUSIC ALBUM OF THE YEAR

- Quique Escamilla for *500 Years of Night*

CLASSICAL COMPOSITION OF THE YEAR

- Brian Current for *Airline Icarus*

The 2015 list of Juno nominees also included a number of artists previously funded by OAC:

- Julie Crochetière
- Melanie Durrant
- Ryan Hemsworth
- Alice Ping Yee Ho
- Bobby Rice
- Crystal Shawanda
- Digging Roots
- Zeds Dead
- Sultans of String
- Timber Timbre
- Theatre of Early Music
- Toronto Symphony Orchestra

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Shortlist for 2015 Ruth and Sylvia Schwartz Children's Book Awards Announced

The **2015 shortlist** for the **Ruth and Sylvia Schwartz Children's Book Awards** was announced today. The **winners** will be selected by **student juries from Toronto's [Alexander Muir / Gladstone Avenue Junior and Senior Public School](#)** and will be announced there on Friday, May 15, 2015.

ABOUT THIS YEAR'S SHORTLIST

- The **Children's Picture Book** category includes tributes to the spirit of invention, the world of emotions, and the possibility of magic in the darkest of places.
- The **Young Adult / Middle Reader** category includes stories of mystery and suspense, hope in the face of injustice and chasing big dreams.

[Read more](#)



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McMaster University choral conductor Rachel Rensink-Hoff awarded the Leslie Bell Prize

Rachel Rensink-Hoff is the latest recipient of the **Leslie Bell Prize for Choral Conducting**. She received the award at a performance of the **McMaster University Choir and the McMaster Chamber Choir**

at
Hamilton's Central Presbyterian Church on **Saturday,
March 21 at 7:30 p.m.**

About Rachel Rensink-Hoff

- Rachel Rensink-Hoff is assistant professor of music at McMaster University, where she teaches courses in conducting, vocal-choral pedagogy and music education.
 - Prior to her appointment at McMaster, Rachel taught at Western University, where she completed a doctorate in music and a master's degree in choral conducting. She has also studied at the Eastman School of Music Summer Conducting Institute, the VoiceCare Network at Saint John's University and the University of Toronto.
 - Rachel conducts three choirs at McMaster University – the McMaster University Choir, the McMaster Women's Choir and the McMaster Chamber Choir – and founded the latter two groups.
 - Under her leadership, the McMaster choirs have collaborated with numerous organizations in the Hamilton community, including the Hamilton Philharmonic, Opera Hamilton and the McMaster Institute for Music and Mind. They have also worked with the Vancouver Chamber Choir and Toronto Mass Choir.
 - Rachel currently serves as president of Choirs Ontario and was recently nominated to the position of vice-president of professional development for Choral Canada.
- [Read more](#)



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Ontario Music Fund Grants Go to 123 Recipients

This year, 123 recipients will receive more than \$14 million in grants from the the [Ontario Music Fund](#). The fund provides grants to music businesses -- large and small -- that produce, distribute and promote Ontario-based music and artists. This support is helping create a business environment where Ontario's talented artists from diverse musical genres and backgrounds can grow and thrive, while helping the industry become even more competitive internationally. [Learn more](#)

Promote Your Summer Events During the Pan Am/Parapan American Games

More than 250,000 people are expected to visit Ontario this summer for the Pan Am/Parapan American Games. Sporting events are happening all across south-central Ontario – from Welland and St. Catharines in the south to Oro-Medonte and Minden Hills in the north.



If there's a Pan Am/Parapan venue near you, your community may be seeing more tourists than usual. How will you connect with them and let them know about arts activities they can experience during their visit?

Here's one way: upload your events **for free** to the official Ontario Tourism mobile app, [Discover Ontario](#). This app uses location-based data to show users the festivals, events and attractions happening near them, in real time. Since its launch, the app has had more than 118,000 downloads and 590,000 event views.

You'll need to register for an account on tourismpartners.com before creating your event listing. [Click here](#) to create an account. Once your account has been approved, you'll receive an email with further directions on how to upload your listing.

For questions about the **Discover Ontario** app, contact the **Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation** at 1-800-263-7836 or info@tourismpartners.com, or visit www.tourismpartners.com. [back to top](#) ^

Staff Comings and Goings

Our thanks to **Francois Boivin** for taking on the role of Acting Francophone Arts Officer while the search for a Francophone Arts Officer continues. Congratulations to **Jenny Knox**, who is the new Program Administrator in the music office, and best wishes to **Anna Gauchat** who has

decided to return to her native Australia.

Finally, we would like to extend a warm welcome to **Laura Brightwell**, Interim Communications Coordinator, Project Management, who is taking over the reigns for **Ashleigh Hodgins** who is currently on maternity leave. Congratulations on the birth of your daughter, Ashleigh!

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