

## Towards a Safe, Confident Re-Opening

Orchestras Canada is pleased to submit this brief on behalf of 70 member orchestras in Ontario.

The pandemic has profoundly affected all Ontarians. Our orchestras are no exception. Since mid-March 2020, Ontario orchestras have balanced care for the well-being of their artists, workers, and audiences with financial prudence and innovation, working tirelessly to chart their own course through the pandemic and maximize the likelihood of a safe and confident return. Some orchestras have temporarily gone silent; others have quickly pivoted to new platforms to keep the music playing.

The economic dislocation has been significant: earned and contributed income (which made up 81.2% of Ontario orchestras' revenues in 18/19) has dropped significantly in the last eleven months. The shock has been profound.

In this brief, we recommend policy and investment options that will ensure that Ontario's arts and culture sector can re-open confidently, when the time is right.

### 1) Supporting and encouraging investment

**Investment in artists and arts organizations** is the best way to ensure the vitality of the sector.

Recommendations regarding investment:

- I. Strategic investment through the Ontario Arts Council.
  - a. an increase of **\$25 million to the OAC's base funding**, starting in 2021-22; and
  - b. a **one-time investment of \$20 million in the OAC** to create a short-term Recovery and Resilience grant program to help artists and smaller arts groups
2. A **\$100 million investment over 3 years in a donation-matching program**, to encourage giving to the arts. Modeled after the highly successful Ontario Arts Endowment Fund, this program would match and incent gifts to annual *operations*. Ideally, donations made from the beginning of the pandemic would be eligible, kickstarting the sector's recovery.

### 2) Venues, education, re-opening protocols

- I. Ontario's cultural spaces need help to conform to new requirements. **Access to safe, accessible, flexible, affordable cultural spaces designed, adapted, or**

**retrofitted** for a post-COVID world is fundamental to a safe return. We recommend an **ongoing provincial capital funding program** for renovations, retrofits, and new cultural space builds. Eligible projects could include HVAC improvements, touch-free entryways and washrooms, entryway and exit redesign, backstage improvements, and flexible seating.

2. Additionally, we recommend emergency assistance to venues and cultural spaces to deal with the high short-term costs of **cleaning, PPE, and other health and safety requirements** at the same time they're facing revenue restrictions due to reduced capacity and shortfalls in rentals. This is particularly important for municipally-run venues that cannot access such programs as the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy.
3. Highlighting the province's joint role in education and the arts, we'd like to see a commitment to providing additional resources to **relaunch instrumental and vocal music programs in Ontario's publicly-funded schools**.
4. Finally, we'd like to see **consultation with performing arts organizations** to ensure that reopening rules are evidence-based, proportional to venue capacities, and consistent with restrictions in other industries.

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