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**Date:** February 24, 2010  
**File:** 1853-01  
**To:** City Manager  
**From:** Sandra Kochan, Cultural Services Manager  
**Subject:** 2010 Professional Arts Grants

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**Recommendation:**

THAT City Council approves grants of \$20,000 to the Alternator Centre for Contemporary Art, \$25,000 to Ballet Kelowna and \$50,000 to the Okanagan Symphony, funded from the 2010 Cultural Services budget for Professional Arts organizations.

**Background:**

Professional Arts grants are available for:

'Organizations that have ongoing paid professional artistic leadership and administration and that pay principle artistic contributors for their services in accordance with generally accepted professional standards. Eligible activities include creative collaboration between professional artists and community members.'

For the past number of years, the three organizations which have received professional arts grants are the Alternator Centre for Contemporary Art, Ballet Kelowna and the Okanagan Symphony.

From 2006 to 2009, these organizations submitted annual applications to the Cultural Services Branch, which then convened a peer review jury to evaluate the submissions and make grant recommendations to Council for approval. In 2009 the peer review jury included 2 city staff, a faculty member from UBCO Creative & Critical Studies, a Chartered Accountant and 2 professional artists.

As part of the recent review of Arts, Culture & Heritage grant programs, staff recommended an alternative review process for Professional Arts Grants, which was presented to Council on November 23, 2009. The revised review process for 2010 consisted of:

- A preliminary meeting with each organization to advise them of the changes to the application and review process;
- A follow up written request to each organization for various financial, programming and organizational information, including a critical self-assessment of their operations, financial management, revenue development, programming, strengths and weaknesses;
- A staff review of submitted materials and previous years' evaluations and reports. The review focused on three key areas: finances, programming and governance. Each of these areas had multiple levels of analysis and investigation;
- An in person meeting with a senior staff person and Board representative from each organization to discuss review findings, exchange information and obtain feedback from each organization about their plans, challenges and relationship with the City and other stakeholders;

- Preparation of review notes with a follow up letter to each organization. In some cases more information has been requested and recommendations for improvement in particular areas have been provided.

All of the organizations have indicated that this review process has been helpful to them because it provides direct and clear feedback from a funder. From a staff perspective, the knowledge gained will assist in ensuring that grant funding continues to generate meaningful impact and benefit for the organizations and the community.

Lastly, each organization has been provided with an opportunity to make a direct presentation to Council, as Public in Attendance. These presentations are scheduled for March 8, 15 and 22<sup>nd</sup>.

The highlights from the staff review of each organization are provided in the attached Appendix A.

**Internal Circulation:**

Director, Recreation & Cultural Services  
General Manager, Community Services

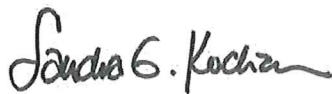
**Financial/Budgetary Considerations:**

The existing 2010 base budget for grants-in-aid to professional arts organizations is \$95,000.

**Considerations not applicable to this report:**

Legal/Statutory Authority  
Legal/statutory Procedural Requirements  
Existing Policy  
Personnel Implications  
Technical Requirements  
External Agency/Public Comments  
Communications Considerations  
Alternate Recommendation

Submitted by:



S. Kochan, Cultural Services Manager

Approved for inclusion:



J. Gabriel, Director, Recreation & Cultural Services

CC: Director of Financial Services



## 2010 PROFESSIONAL ARTS GRANTS - APPENDIX A

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM STAFF REVIEW:

#### **Okanagan Symphony (presenting to Council on March 8):**

The orchestra is in its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary season, with diverse programming which appeals to a wide audience. The season includes a mix of traditional classical repertoire, works by local composers, pops music, and performances with youth and community musicians. Guest artists and conductors are also featured.

Of particular note is the season finale, in early May, featuring a performance of 'Quaternity: A Cantata for Seasons,' a newly commissioned work by local composer Imant Raminsh, developed in a joint venture with symphonic choruses across the country and featuring guest artists from the Canadian Opera Company.

Pre-concert talks and 'Afterthoughts' post-concert gatherings provide audience members with opportunities to learn more about the music and meet the performers. A variety of subscription and single ticket price options make performances accessible for children, youth, seniors, and music teachers and students.

A strong relationship with the Youth Symphony is assisting in the development of young musicians who can eventually join the main orchestra. Young musicians in the community also benefit from workshops and master classes delivered by orchestra musicians and guest performers. Music Director and Conductor Rosemary Thomson is providing strong leadership in the artistic development of orchestra musicians, with ongoing mentoring and exploration of new and appropriate repertoire.

The orchestra has made a significant financial recovery, largely due to increases in ticket and subscription sales. Kelowna attendance is at approximately 90% capacity and subscriptions in Kelowna have increased by 19% in the last year.

The organization continues to focus on increasing its earned revenues through diversification of its offerings and services, and broadening its outreach to audiences, donors and communities throughout its performance area. A major annual fundraiser provides a significant net contribution to revenues.

#### **Ballet Kelowna (presenting to Council on March 15):**

Ballet Kelowna is in its 7<sup>th</sup> season and employs 6 professional dancers as well as production staff. Touring performances are a core part of the organization's purpose, providing artistic development for dancers, and reinforcing the company's role as ambassador for the discipline of dance, and, informally, for their home community of Kelowna. The touring schedule is ambitious, with 23 performances scheduled in 2010 in communities throughout British Columbia.

2009 marked the first year that the company offered tickets by season subscription. The target for subscription sales was exceeded by 20%. The company also regularly provides outreach and low or no cost performances in other public venues such as shopping malls, hospitals, nightclubs, care homes and schools.

Through its affiliation with the Okanagan Summer Dance Intensive and the Okanagan School of Ballet, Ballet Kelowna is engaged in the development of young dancers who may proceed to join the company at the beginning of their professional careers. Some of the dancers who started their careers with Ballet Kelowna have moved on to working with larger dance companies throughout North America.

Artistic Director David LaHay creates a number of newly choreographed works for the company each year, and the company also performs new works by other Canadian choreographers. 'In Arden Woods,' choreographed by David LaHay, had its world premiere at the opening of the 2009/10 season in Kelowna, and featured a music score composed by local pianist Arnold Draper and performed by Draper and vocal ensemble Candesca.

The organization has a diversity of revenue derived from ticket sales, private donations and sponsorships, grants from all levels of government and fundraising.

An annual high-profile fundraising event provides a significant contribution to operating revenues.

The organization is focusing its growth strategy and financial objectives on increasing its fund development through sponsors and donations, and secondarily by increasing its audiences and ticket sales.

Through its strategic planning process, the organization has set growth targets both for artistic programming and touring, and for its fiscal and audience development. The organization is aware of the challenges and pressures created by growth and is working to achieve a realistic balance which meets the needs and ambitions of both their performers and their management team.

**Alternator Centre for Contemporary Art (presenting to Council on March 22):**

The programming of the Alternator Centre is consistent with its mandate to provide an alternative forum and venue for a range of contemporary art practices including performance, video, installation, visual art and interventions in the public realm. Many of their programs and projects engage with social issues.

Of particular note is the Centre's ongoing commitment to featuring the work of established and emerging aboriginal artists, many of them from the Okanagan region.

The Centre's membership and audience is predominantly in the 18-35 age range, a population perceived to be under-served and under-represented by the mainstream commercial and public gallery community. The design and content of their events and programming is successfully attracting and building this audience, many of whom are emerging artists themselves.

The organization has been affected by some reductions in provincial funding but continues to benefit from other provincial and federal multi-year commitments. The organization has been consistently successful in obtaining project grants from all levels of government and a number of foundations.

The Wearable Art Gala, an annual fundraiser heading into its 7<sup>th</sup> year, is very popular with artists, audiences and media and is moving to a larger venue and a summer time slot in 2010.

In 2010 the Centre (located in the Rotary Centre for the Arts) will focus its programming on 4 main exhibitions, its annual Members' Show, and a July Music & Media Arts festival built (with a number of partner organizations) around the Wearable Art Gala. The conversion of a small exhibition room into a lounge has created a space for a regular Philosophers' Café and literary presentation series, and also provides a place where members can meet and mingle with each other and exhibiting artists.

The Alternator's Media Arts Centre, supported by an annual grant from the Canada Council, has hosted 22 visiting artists since 2003 and will continue to provide ongoing residencies for local and visiting artists. Artists in residence are typically engaged both in community outreach and professional development for young artists.

Membership in the Alternator is provided at reasonable cost. Membership benefits include participation in an on-line gallery, the Wearable Art Gala and the annual members' show, opportunity to use the Media Arts Centre space and equipment, and getting involved in other initiatives such as commissioning projects, strategic planning and artist exchanges. In Kelowna, these types of membership benefits are unique to the Alternator Centre.