

Performance Creation Canada Inaugural Meeting

Final Report

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Performance Creation Canada Inaugural Meeting - Meeting Summary

Meeting Logistics

The inaugural meeting of the Performance Creation Canada network was hosted by One Yellow Rabbit Performance Theatre and held in conjunction with the 18th Annual High Performance Rodeo. The meeting was held over two days, January 9th and 10th, 2004, in Vertigo Mystery Theatre's Studio Theatre.

The meeting was attended by sixty-three delegates, twenty-seven of whom were invited Canadian artists, administrators, presenters, and/or educators with the remaining attending locally out of personal, academic, and/or professional interest. Invited artists were funded to attend, with the costs of their travel and accommodation covered through support from the Canada Council Outreach, Canada Council Inter-Arts, and the Department of Canadian Heritage. The Alberta Foundation for the Arts and the Calgary Region Arts Foundation provided support by attending and offering informed advice to the gathering. Massimo Mancini, a member of the Board of Directors from the Informal European Theatre Meeting, was invited to present successful European models of networking and to facilitate discussion on a similar endeavor across Canada.

The meeting was coordinated by Michael Green, Co-Artistic Director of One Yellow Rabbit Performance Theatre and Curator of the High Performance Rodeo. It was facilitated by Blake Brooker, Co-Artistic Director of One Yellow Rabbit Performance Theatre. Michele Decottignies, Artistic Director of Stage Left Productions/Disability Arts Festival recorded it. An informal agenda was established but, as the spirit of open sharing prevailed, the topics for discussion were amended accordingly. More comprehensive detail on the meeting agenda, discussion, and actions follow.

Meeting Objectives

Unlike existing professional networks and associations, the initial Performance Creation Canada (PCC) network strove to operate in an informal spirit of inclusiveness and open sharing. PCC, therefore, provided a forum for the discussion of a broad variety of topics pertaining to performance creation and the developing ecology in which it occurs. The primary goal of this first meeting was to lay the groundwork for a continuing PCC network. Ultimately PCC may play an integral part in the development of Canada's performing arts milieu by facilitating increased circulation, touring, and dissemination opportunities for professional performance creation artists and presenters throughout Canada. Topics that were central to this first meeting therefore included, but were not limited to, the examination and discussion of artistic practices, working conditions, geography and regional issues, cultural diversity, networking, funding, circulation/touring, presenting, education, professional development, and audience development.

Meeting Attendees

The following invited Canadian artists, administrators, presenters, and/or educators attended the inaugural meeting of Performance Creation Canada:

Glenn Alteen, Grunt Gallery, Vancouver
Blake Brooker, One Yellow Rabbit, Calgary
Ann Brophy, Artistic Fraud of Newfoundland, St. John's
Paul Caskey, Studio 303, Montreal
Michele Decottignies, Stage Left Productions/Disability Arts Festival, Calgary
Chris Dray, Yukon Arts Centre, Whitehorse
Ken Gass, Factory Theatre, Toronto
Michael Green, One Yellow Rabbit/High Performance Rodeo, Calgary
Gay Hauser, Live Art, Halifax
Ron Jenkins, Workshop West/Kaboom!, Edmonton
Tomas Jonsson, The New Gallery/Mountain Standard Time, Calgary
Andrew Laurensen, Radix, Vancouver
Massimo Mancini, Sosta Palmizi, Italy
Emile Morin, Recto-Verso/Mois Multi, Québec
Michele Moss, Dancers' Studio West, Calgary
Lou-Ann Neel, Aboriginal Arts Program, Banff
David Oiyee, Buddies in Bad Times/Rhubarb!, Toronto
Robin Pointras, New Dance Horizons, Regina
Heather Redfern, Catalyst Theatre, Edmonton
Rafik-Hubert Sabbagh, Imédia, International Artistic Communications/Transatlantique, Montréal
Richard Simas, Théâtre la Chapelle/Vasistas, Montreal
Gerry Thurston, Department of Drama, U of C, Calgary
Sherry Yoon, Boca Del Lupo, Vancouver

Funding agencies who were represented:

Roger Gaudet, Department of Canadian Heritage, Ottawa
Paul Reich, Alberta Foundation for the Arts, Edmonton
Claude Schryer, Canada Council/Inter-arts, Ottawa
Dale Turri, Calgary Region Arts Foundation, Calgary
Gerry Kretzel, Department of Canadian Heritage, Calgary

The following additional artists also attended from the arts community at large:

Eric Moscopedis, Mutton Busting Festival of Emerging Performance Artists, Calgary
Grant Burns, Old Trout Puppet Workshop, Calgary
Steve Schroeder, One Yellow Rabbit Performance Theatre, Calgary
Eugene Stickland, Alberta Theatre Projects, Calgary
Damon Johnson, Dancers' Studio West, Calgary
Denise Clarke, One Yellow Rabbit Performance Theatre, Calgary

Allan Boss, CBC Radio One, Calgary
Griselle Amaro, University of Calgary
Onalea Gilbertson, Dandi Productions, Calgary
Michele Sereda, Curtain Raisers, Regina
Jennifer Fawcett, Performance Artist, Toronto
Rene Amber, Performing Artist, Calgary
Christine Cook, Green Fools International Festival of Animated Objects, Calgary
Samuel Carriggo Meza, Bubonic Tourists, Calgary
Cameron May, Mountain Standard Time, Calgary
Eric Rose, Theatre Calgary's PetroCanada Play Advancement Series, Calgary
Doug Curtis, Ghost River Theatre, Calgary
Janet Russell, Intrepid Theatre, Victoria
T Crane, Spoken Word Artist, Vancouver and Calgary
Mike Hickey, Mountain Standard Time, Calgary
Dean Bareham, Green Fools, Calgary
Jenny Esdale, Green Fools, Calgary
Stacey Horton, Independent Dance Theatre Artist, Calgary
Bonnie Gratz, Center Stage Theater Company, Calgary
Lisa Doolittle, University of Lethbridge Dance Series, Lethbridge
Karen Hines, Performing Artist, Toronto
Vicki Stroich, Alberta Theatre Projects, Calgary
Lisa O'Shawnessy, Presenter (intern), Australia
Henry Kolenko, Kronos Quartet, Vancouver
Shawna Dempsey, Performance Artist, Winnipeg
Kate Lawes, Theater Junction, Calgary
Brian Cochrane, Drama Student, University of Saskatchewan
Mat Keys, Drama Student, University of Saskatchewan
Denise Fujiwara, Can-Asian Dance Fest, Toronto
Davida Monk, Choreographer/ teacher, University of Calgary

Meeting Agenda

Friday, January 9, 2004

Session One: 11:00am

Agenda Topics:

Welcome to the PCC Inaugural Meeting, the Purpose of our Gathering, and What is a network, what does it do, and how does it work?

Discussion Summary:

Blake Brooker welcomed all to the first meeting of Performance Creation Canada (PCC) and explained that the purpose of the meeting was to learn about networking and the concept of networking. He also explained that some of the impetus for PCC came from Michael Green's experiences at the Informal European Theatre Meetings (IETM). Documents detailing this organization and their networking structure were provided to delegates; and Massimo Mancini, from IETM's Board of Directors, was present to talk about that organization. It was noted that IETM is primarily non-hierarchical and non-bureaucratic in structure.

Blake invited delegates to participate in PCC as individuals, rather than representatives of companies or organizations. He posed the question: how do we set up PCC and make sure there is not a distinction between the participants, how do we ensure that they can all contribute equally? He then invited all delegates to introduce themselves via a three-sentence bio. All did.

Following the introductions, Blake then explained what One Yellow Rabbit (OYR), the High Performance Rodeo (HPR), and Mutton Busting are. He then invited all delegates to attend shows at the HPR as much as possible. He also explained that OYR runs a season, creates performances, presents, hosts a school, and produces ancillary projects such as their current radio play and this PCC initiative.

Michael Green presented an Opening Address, the full text of which is provided in the Appendix of this report. He then presented comments from Brian Webb, the full text of which is also included in the Appendix.

Michael then thanked the PCC delegates with these comments: Thank you for coming together to embark with us at One Yellow Rabbit on what I hope will prove to be one of the grandest experiments in the evolution of Canadian contemporary performance culture. And welcome to the High Performance Rodeo.

Blake suggested a tone for this PCC meeting: "We have to open. We have to share. We have to not guard our secrets. There seems often to be a clamp on information, In a network we could instead exchange and open up to one another."

Michael invited those delegates with experiences with networks and/or networking to share them with the gathering.

Richard Simas, Emile Morin, Glenn Alteen, and Chris Dray shared their experiences, both positive and negative, with various networks in various disciplines. Common elements included coming together for a shared purpose (e.g. advocating for funding); sharing information (for example, via list-serves on the internet); the challenges of taking on a project together; and longevity.

Andrew Laurenson spoke about the Popstart initiative (www.popstart.ca) and Rafik Sabbagh provided some detail about IETM's organizational structure and philosophy: "IETM is committed to being informal. It is not a marketplace. When I first started going to IETM I was naïve because I wanted to market". He also shared information about an ad hoc network that served a concentration of international dance presenters. He explained that successful marketing was happening through the friendships that exist within a network.

Denise Clarke raised the question of why we feel the need to define something like a network: "We don't try to define friendship. It just is. You desire it. It supports you. It is intangible, but the benefit is there". Chris Dray supported this assertion: "I've attend many meetings to get information. All of you have done wonderful, creative things. I need to talk to you. Everything I need to know to be successful is in your brains. I just need to get to know you."

Break

12:45pm: Session One (continued)

Agenda Topics:

Mr. Massimo Mancini, Artistic Director of Sosta Palmizi and long-time member of IETM and other European Networks

Discussion Summary:

Blake Brooker welcomed the guests back to the meeting and took care of some "housekeeping" regarding flight/travel receipts, the HPR schedule and tickets, and the PCC meeting agenda. He then introduced Massimo Mancini from Italy/IETM.

Massimo thanked PCC for inviting him to Canada and explained that he came here with the same attitude as at IETM: to share information! He then provided comprehensive information about IETM's history, organizational structure, philosophy, meetings, memberships, funding, plus the challenges IETM has faced and the tactics used to address them.

2:00pm: Lunch (provided by the Canada Council/Inter-Arts)

3:30pm: Session Two

Agenda Topics:

What are the tangible/intangible benefits of a network?

Discussion Summary:

Blake Brooker explained that “in keeping with the informal sensibility, a hard agenda was not formulated. But we need to figure out if this organization needs a mandate; and, if so, what that mandate might be”?

The new arrivals introduced themselves.

Delegates brain-stormed ideas about what PCC could be about and compiled a list of needs and issues that PCC could potentially address:

NEEDS

- a touring network for dance-based multi-disciplinary work
- support/venues/residency for emerging multi-disciplinary artists
- ways to reduce isolation and increase connectivity (to feel connected from coast to coast)
- travel resources
- communication across the country
- ways to foster community on local and national levels
- collaboration
- diversity in the work and in participating artists/presenters/administrators
- regionalism (where you are geographically via province, city or part of city)
- to create a think tank/window/mirror with which to examine ourselves
- a pedagogy of creativity
- education of audience, media, presenters, funding agencies
- imaginative facilities
- research and development
- trust and sharing

ISSUES

- disciplinary definitions (especially in relation to funding)
- inter-generational mentoring and monitoring
- cultural survival techniques
- advocacy
- best practices
- artistic/administrative training and development
- artistic vision

Discussion ensued about whether this list of needs and issues differs from what an organization like PACT, for example, takes on. Several delegates expressed disinterest in engaging in another organization that is tackling logistics. They instead advocated for an organization that

talks about the art itself. These artists would like PCC to potentially become a forum of critical discussion of artistic practice. Massimo explained that IETM provides a forum where both practical and the aesthetic aspects can be addressed, because talking about art can quickly become either vague or boring - especially without actually seeing it! Michael suggested that artists have to reflect on practical issues when considering aesthetic opportunities. And that multi-disciplinary artists need to set up an environment in which they can reflect in a relaxed and yet passionate atmosphere.

Paul Reich from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts addressed the gathering. He explained that it was nice to be able to listen rather than explain: “When I became an arts funder I almost instantly became the ‘enemy’. I have great empathy for the arts community. But problems exist about trust and communication: artists are not feeling empowered, and they are also feeling like they have no opportunity to influence policy, etc..

Communication and trust became key areas of consideration for PCC.

Paul suggested that PCC could be effective in advocating the needs of artists and in communicating with funding agents.

Break.

5:15pm: Session Two (continued)

Agenda Topics:

What are the tangible/intangible benefits of a network?

Discussion Summary:

New arrivals introduced themselves.

The list of needs and issues was added to and reexamined in light of previous discussion about what delegates do not want PCC to become. The philosophy of open sharing and trust was discussed, with some concern articulated about the intellectual ownership of ideas. It was suggested that: “Who cares if someone steals an idea and does it in another country? You have to liberate the idea. It won’t be the same idea. Even if it is, who cares? There are always more ideas. It’s better to risk being open, to find out if the idea will work or not.”

There was also conversation around the idea of artistic vision: What is an artistic vision? What is the role of art in society? How are our lives shaped and influenced by art? How does an artistic vision drive us?

6:00pm: End of day one

Saturday, January 10, 2004

11:30am: Session Three

Agenda Topics:

Welcome back to the PCC Inaugural Meeting. What does our community need in a network?

Discussion Summary:

New arrivals introduced themselves.

Michael presented a definition of a network: A network is a facilitating structure, an organism. It is a way of organising rather than an organisation. It is the flexibility, the approach, the process, the mentality of a network which creates its special added value. A network is a synergy, it is the multiplying effect itself. A network is a part of the civil society which takes place in the public space. Networking is an organic development which evolves from the need of individuals to make contact, to exchange and to work together. The energy, information and power of a network flows horizontally and from the bottom up.

Blake talked about the OYR ethic: “we put FUN at the top of all we do; we also define “success” for ourselves - and “failure” too; we create own context”.

Denise spoke about OYR’s Summer Lab Intensive and it’s ethic: a laboratory space where artistic sciences can come together; it’s like a party where an ethos naturally emerges; there is no scheduling. Success in the Summer Lab can be equated with a “swell party” rather than with the amount of work produced.

Comments were added about the potential for PCC to create this same sort of space: PCC needs to serve artists and to provide a space for failure. Let’s not just do what we know will succeed. Let’s create space for risk!

The elements of success were discussed for PCC:

- not using nor exploiting others in the process of creating/presenting our own work
- longevity, bringing others into the fold
- broadly based participation
- funders are not “they”; they are equal partners
- inclusive and open, welcoming people in
- create a forum where people can meet and discuss their art
- reduce isolation
- get information out
- create opportunities to connect with artists in other disciplines
- a hub for people whose shared interests/pedagogy/concerns are about keeping culture alive and vital in this country
- a collaborative, conceptual framework/model
- people come to it bringing themselves, discovering what people ask and what they want

- of them - and giving it to them freely
- a wellness virus that is propagated by collaborative activity
- the gatherings provide streams of information that touch into the pragmatic and esoteric.

Some questions were asked:

What's different between what we're trying to create and what we are engaged in?

Do you feel a hunger and a desire for the development of what you haven't had so far?

A "Mongolian metaphor" was brought up by Michael: "The reasons that people cross the street to meet and talk in the middle is because they feel lonely and crave both information and contact. Existing festivals and events aren't doing it for me. I can't give as much as I feel I want and I am not getting what I crave. IETM felt more inclusive, more generous, more open than anything I've experienced. The festival and the work was secondary. I was in a room full of people who all knew, and practiced, the process of openness and sharing".

Blake suggested that PCC could be a festival that takes place in the head and between people. It can be social and civil; profoundly "communitarian". A collaborative community. A stimulation.

Discussion then centered around whether or not to host PCC meetings in conjunction with Festivals. The pros included economics (it's expensive to travel across this country); we see what's going on in other parts of the country; sharing and openness are the main thing, not the work. The cons included the limited ability of non-presenters to attend Festivals - how does PCC stay inclusive?; the need to attend a festival and the need to attend a PCC meeting may not be the same; the host city - if already producing a festival - may not also be able to host a PCC meeting.

Some other issues that arose include the need to discuss language, mobility funding, how PCC will move around, what performance creation means, nation building, and defining PCC more clearly.

Break

1:15pm: Session Three (continued)

Agenda Topics:

What does our community need in a network?

Discussion Summary:

Claude Schryer discussed his role at the Canada Council and the Inter-Arts office and presented his observations of the meeting. He informed the gathering that he will be thinking about how the Canada Council can fund gatherings like PCC. He advised that clarity must come of PCC so that funders can understand what you want and where you are going.

Roger Gaudet spoke about his role at Canadian Heritage and reminded PCC that this initiative isn't emerging in a vacuum. He provided a history of arts priorities from 1950 to 2010. He suggested that an important aspect of PCC is the role it can play for artists and presenters (there is a huge thirst for dialogue from non-specialized presenters). He also provided some suggestions for PCC that align with current arts policy and explained that PCC's input may help determine the government's future investment in the arts.

Claude added that the governance of arts groups is interesting. What governance is needed for different organizations? It's time to look at that philosophically.

2:30pm: Lunch

4:30pm: Session Four

Agenda Topics:

How do we begin to shape Performance Creation Canada?

Discussion Summary:

Blake posed the question that needs to be asked: where should we go next? How do we begin to shape Performance Creation Canada? But then he suggested that instead of asking that, let's first assess our impressions of the meeting thus far.

New arrivals introduced themselves.

Dale Turri from the Calgary Region Arts Foundation spoke. She explained that she is likely the only non-artist in the gathering. Instead, she is an effective advocate of the arts as an arts lover. Her strength is in introducing people where they need to be introduced. If you can get business people in PCC who are interested in the arts, that would be fabulous. She shared her experience with networks and suggested that PCC finds ways to continue the dialogue and to include as many people/shareholders as possible – business, boards, etc..

Various delegates presented their impressions, which included:

- I like the idea of a group/network interested in both practical and philosophical concerns
- I am fascinated by this thing about establishing a pretext: PCC can't be too free-form; it must be responsive to the group ethos. How do you then set up the pretext in which the real things happen?
- it's been wonderful to come here and be considered an individual
- I've had opportunity to talk/exchange ideas. I am going away with things I wouldn't have touched upon otherwise. It's made me interested in seeing if the network continues
- I have enjoyed the non-hierarchical structure and the openness of this meeting. It's such a wonderful feeling of generosity
- all I know of Canada is the east. Not the west. I like PCC and the opportunity to see more of Canada. It's neat. I enjoyed it
- I think this is a great genesis of something. We need to go now and think about the idea of spreading the word, of getting more representation

Discussion followed about widening the PCC network and how to define who it may serve. Some agreed that definitions are helpful, while others felt them too exclusive. This led to further discussion about what PCC will be. Many advocated to let it evolve. Many put forth ideas and suggestions. Some common elements included: openness, sharing, inclusiveness, information sharing, an informal structure, the value of meeting others in the arts, and “it’s about the art”.

A question was raised about the name “Performance Creation Canada” and where it came from. Gerry Thurston explained that he hosts the PCC web site, which was initiated by several artists. OYR offered to ask their Web Master to donate time to the PCC web site.

Several artists offered to host the next PCC meeting.

Michael asked for delegates to volunteer on a PCC Steering Committee. He explained that this Committee would not determine a definition or structure but carve out a way of getting to the next meeting, where more of these issues and topics can be discussed further.

The following volunteered:

- Ann Brophy
- Chris Dray
- Sherri Yoon
- Rafik Sabbagh
- Eric Moscopedis
- Gerry Thurston
- Michele Decottignies
- Lou Ann Neel
- Michael Green
- Andrew Laursen
- Eric Rose
- Christine Cook
- Norman Armour
- Robin Poitras

Blake and Michael thanked the gathering.

6:00pm: End of day two

PCC: OPENING ADDRESS

There exist in Canada today a number of organizations whose purpose is to support specific facets of this country's cultural industries. The Professional Association of Canadian Theatres, for instance, is concerned with issues that impact a membership of theatre producers as defined by the Canadian Theatre Agreement. CANDANCE is a self-described network of dance producers and presenters who, though wonderfully idiosyncratic when encountered individually, have banded together for the purpose of bringing unity of purpose to the upper echelons of Canada's dance scene. At the other end of the spectrum are professional associations like Canadian Actors' Equity and Union des artistes, each set up to safeguard its membership in their dealings with the first two.

Professional associations like these share the cultural landscape with showcases and festival-based discussion events, and this has been the state "networking" within our industry for my entire adult life. In almost every case, these "networks" have as their mandate the practical realization of pre-considered outcomes: to set up tours, to land co-producers, to lecture, to discuss issues of mutual frustration: and always more or less ineffectively. Or, when some practical goal has been met, I am of the opinion that perhaps success was realized in spite of the artificial environments these networks generate, and not because of them.

These types of associations, though important and useful for what they, are the antithesis of the creative environment I hope we are able to describe here this weekend.

My own interest in and commitment to this type of networking initiative goes back a long way: A few years ago – I think that it might have been spring of 1997 – I found myself at a round-table discussion in Toronto. The process by which I arrived there was circuitous, slightly confrontational, and wholly indicative of the reasons why, ten years later, I find myself addressing you all now.

I had been on the telephone to Ottawa, trying to leg-wrestle a modicum of financial support for our festival from the established bureaucracies who, although entrusted with a mandate to nurture the evolution of a unique and identifiable culture in Canada, were in fact not equipped to deal with developments as they were unfolding. At the time, neither the Canada Council nor the Department of Canadian Heritage could provide a single grant competition for which HPR was eligible.

The telephone conversation that resulted in my attendance at that Toronto meeting went something like this – this is 1997:

Me: Are you sure I have no recourse to appeal your decision to continue to ignore our starving festival?

Ottawa: Well, lets discuss it further when we see each other in Toronto next month.

Me What are you talking about?

Ottawa: Aren't you coming to the meeting at Harbourfront?

Me: What meeting?

Ottawa: Oh, it's nothing.... It's just a meeting of some Canadian presenters.

Me: I don't know anything about it.

Ottawa: That's because it's a meeting of presenters of work of a larger scale.

Me: You mean like Carbone 14? (We had just presented Carbone 14's Place of Dead Souls).

Ottawa: Well, yes...but we already have someone coming from Calgary.

Me: Who???

Ottawa: ATP (who at that point had presented nobody, as far as I was aware – a situation Mr. Bob White has since addressed admirably).

Anyway, I crashed that Harbourfront meeting. But while I was there, I got myself into even more trouble.

I was sitting in a room with the artistic directors of Carrefour, Festival de theatre des Amérique and World Stage who were trying to convince a motley collection of Canadian "presenters" to align themselves to form a circuit that would accommodate national tours for large, mostly European shows. These were the shows that normally made up the program of the spring theatre festivals in Toronto, Montreal and Québec City. The hope must have been to amortize the cost of bringing them to Ontario and Quebec by touring them to the provinces in the summer.

This may well be a worthwhile idea. But as a practical initiative the concept was doomed to failure from the start, for a number of important reasons:

- (1) The good people at the head of the spring theatre festivals of Central Canada had no experience programming for audiences outside their established, metropolitan milieu;
- (2) The disparate group around the table had little experience in presentation on this scale;
- (3) The regional presenters had, in many cases, never met each other before, and were therefore in no position to operate as an effective group;

- (4) The whole concept seemed forced. It was as if the leadership of these three festivals had been forced into pitching this strategy by funding institutions desperate to see public investments go further.

The effort had a less than grass roots character to it. It was the epitome of a top-down, almost imperialist initiative that seemed to value the wrong things.

It was a frustrating affair. And, as you will notice, nothing came of it. Nobody could foresee that at the time. But I found it to be rankling experience. I was disturbed by the fact that the Council and Heritage could consider spending thousands to help tour large international acts across Canada when One Yellow Rabbit's High Performance Rodeo could not get a dime.

When it was my turn to say something I said something like this: Can anyone here seriously imagine selling tickets to a 9-hour Lithuanian Hamlet in the middle of summer in any Canadian centre west of Toronto? Or even in Toronto? Of course not. You want a network of presenters to move important work across the country, but you can't manufacture one in this way.

It seemed we had nothing in common And then I said (this is 1997, remember.): Anyway, we already have a network in Canada. It's an ad hoc entity with no name, but we commission, create and tour multi-disciplinary creation based work across this country every year – not in the summer, but in the dead of winter.

What hubris on my part. I know that now, but even then I could see the possibilities for something like Performance Creation Canada. As early as 1993 High Performance Rodeo was learning the benefits of co-producing tours of Canadian artists with like-minded presenters in Victoria, Vancouver, Lethbridge, Edmonton, Regina, Toronto and Peterborough. Out of a very real and mutual necessity, we were in the process of forging an alliance of our own.

In order to net the grant funding needed to program our various festivals and seasons, we regional presenters needed each other. We were in the process of demonstrating that our emerging community of regional presenters was capable of finding each other and supporting one another in spite of tremendous challenges represented by distance, lack of funding for travel, our highly individualistic mandates and personalities, and our relative inexperience.

Interestingly, many of these original presenters had something else in common: in many cases the presenters also operated as a creation based company in their own right.

Of course, after this outburst around the table at the offices of Harbourfront, the pressure was on me to demonstrate what I was talking about. And that following January I was successful in persuading no fewer than 25 presenters from as far away as St. John's ND to gather in Calgary for the High Performance Rodeo.

In retrospect this, too, was an ill-considered, if earnest, attempt at networking. It was certainly nothing like the grass roots, individual artist-up type of democratic entity we are attempting to envision today. It was a "presenters' meeting". But it was a start.

Imagine my excitement the first time I attended the Informal European Theatre Meeting where practical considerations are not allowed to cloud an atmosphere of true communication, participation and observation. The one "ritual" that was drilled into me upon my arrival in Galway was: Welcome, stranger. No buying. No selling. Have fun.

So, what happens then? Well, relieved of the duty to hustle, the IETM member is allowed to talk to anyone they so desire without any pressure beyond the common courtesy of not being a social boor. As a consequence, you end up spending time with people you actually like! Of course the buying and selling happens. It always does. It happens in the bar. It happens on the street. It happens even more so because now you are talking to someone with whom you share more than an economic equation.

A network like IETM works in ways that our existing Canadian affiliations do not. One reason for this is that IETM is actively dedicated, not to achieving tangible results, but to fostering a relaxed and passionate atmosphere in which free-radicals, rogue electrons, particle/wave impulses and other creative energies are encouraged to interact without the expectation of practical results.

This, of course, is the essence of artistic endeavor. Ours is a people business, in the most profound sense. In a creative environment, the tangible benefits of networking are manifest because that network was designed to precipitate the unexpected.

The concept of IETM is not as an institution at all. IETM is an environment.

The performing community in this country is continuing to evolve and expand more rapidly than existing support organizations are able to adapt. At the same time, many artists continue to move away from traditional forms of creation and presentation while defining practices and disciplines unique to their distinctive artistic vision. The multi-disciplinary field of performance creation is emerging as a major force in tomorrow's performing arts scene in Canada.

In Western Canada we use the term "Performance creation" to refer, quite simply, to work that is performed by the artist or artists who created it. Unlike more traditional forms of artistic endeavor, performance creation includes a variety of disciplines. As a form of expression, performance creation challenges traditional concepts of regionalism, multi-culturalism and new artistic practices, and traditional relationships between the artist, management, the presenter, the media and the audience.

As the practice of multi-disciplinary performance creation evolves, so too does our need for a practical and critical exchange of energy and ideas.

My vision for Performance Creation Canada is a fellowship dedicated to a thorough and holistic discussion and celebration of the Canadian performance creation milieu. This would eventually involve the discussion of artistic practices and the ecology in which they are exercised. Educators, critics, academics and archivists are clearly central to this process, and this intellectual engagement is another characteristic unique to the philosophy of Performance Creation Canada.

And to our delegates today who are representing the interests of the funding agencies whose responsibility it is to make sure that taxpayers' money is not squandered; who might quite rightly be worried that no practical outcome could possibly come from an initiative with so idealistic and elusive a mandate as the one I am proposing I say that the myriad practical and ultimately tangible successes of a network like IETM speaks for itself.

Unlike existing professional "networks" and associations, Performance Creation Canada would operate in an informal spirit of inclusivity. Disciplines represented will include any performing or performative art form that is ultimately presented by the artist or artists who created it. Artist-based theatre, dance, interdisciplinary performance and performance art, and the presenters and agencies that support them, are examples that fall within the definition of "community" that Performance Creation Canada seeks to engage.

In many ways, this current initiative follows on from earlier forays into this area. Other festivals and artist run galleries have explored the concept. Six Stages held an "Informal American Theatre Meeting" proto-type in Toronto some years ago. And much of the information, philosophy and technique involved in performance creation can be found on the web site founded and maintained by University of Calgary educator and artist Gerald Thurston.

Performance Creation Canada will be neither a showcase nor an association for any special interest group. Performance Creation Canada is not a "presenters' network", but will naturally support such an endeavor. Performance Creation Canada encourages the participation of companies and individual artists, educational institutions, festivals, agents, government agencies, publishers and the media.

Performance Creation Canada seeks to be – not an institution – but an environment. All environments are a symbiotic synthesis of the parts that make the whole. All environments take their character from the individual features of which they are comprised, and our environment is no different. The ecology of our environment depends on each of you individually to bring yourselves to it.

In closing, I would like to read to you an email I received from Mr. Brian Webb, artistic director of Brian Webb Dance Company, artistic director of the Canada Dance Festival held biannually in Ottawa, and president of the CanDance Network.

Note from Brian Webb

I'm sorry that I can't make these meetings, as I will be in Montreal and Ottawa. I think that they are timely and important for the development of contemporary expression in Canada.

My ideas are presented in point form and are not fully developed. But here goes:

- (1) That the focus is interdisciplinary is very important. All contemporary expression, no matter the media, has common concerns, especially finding any kind of relevancy in the culture at large. How to build a sustaining, appreciative audience from the community is important.
- (2) Breaking barriers and isolation is very important. We should work together on common concerns but after we become more knowledgeable of what we are all doing.
- (3) The concept of including artist, presenters, curators, writers, educators as well as funders is a fine concept. The more we recognize the importance that each part of the arts community plays, the stronger and more relevant we will become. Art is placed at the center of our conversation.
- (4) Building a critical dialogue from within our ranks is necessary before we consider including the interested public. I respect the importance that you give this in your introduction to the weekend's activities.

These next comments refer to the structure the group may consider. I am making them referring to my position as chairperson of the CanDance Network.

- (1) An informal structure is important. It provides equality, spontaneous discussion and an organic growth.
- (2) By becoming an NASO, CanDance has had to formalize our structure (board of directors, etc). This changes how the Network communicates. It is more efficient but it is obvious not all members are equally comfortable with this formalization.
- (3) It is important that this initiative develops organically from the community for the community and not be driven by a bureaucratic agenda.
- (4) There will be those who will put more energy into driving this concept forward. We will have to find a way for them to do that that still recognizes the input of all those interested.
- (5) It's important that this new network be distinctive and not copy what is already being accomplished. I feel its distinctiveness is in its interdisciplinary nature. I hope that we will also have the participation of the visual arts community. It will be important for us to communicate with and be informed of all the networks that currently exist.

Good Luck with these meetings!

Brian H. Webb
Brian Webb Dance Company
The Canada Dance Festival
The CanDance Network

Closing of Michael Green's Opening Address

Thank you for coming together to embark with us at One Yellow Rabbit on what I hope will prove to be one of the grandest experiments in the evolution of Canadian contemporary performance culture. And welcome to the High Performance Rodeo.

Michael Green
Co-Artistic Director, One Yellow Rabbit
Curator, High Performance Rodeo

Networking Mandate

A network is a group of individuals who all take responsibility for shared goals'.

A network is a dynamic system for communication, co-operation and partnership.'

A network is NOT:

- a bureaucracy;
- a hierarchy;
- a lobby;
- a private initiative;
- a temporary project;
- an association, a federation nor a union;
- a closed club.

A network is a facilitating structure, an organism. It is a way of organising rather than an organisation. It is the flexibility, the approach, the process, the mentality of a network which creates its special added value. A network is a synergy, it is the multiplying effect itself. A network is a part of the civil society which takes place in the public space.

Networking is an organic development which evolves from the need of individuals to make contact, to exchange and to work together. The energy, information and power of a network flows horizontally and from the bottom up.

PCC Full Meeting Notes

Session One

Agenda Topics:

Welcome to the PCC Inaugural Meeting, the Purpose of our Gathering, and What is a network, what does it do, and how does it work?

Discussion Summary:

Blake Brooker: Welcome everyone to the first meeting of Performance Creation Canada (PCC). We're going to be learning about networks and the concept of networking. We think we know what it is because we've been part of the sum, but maybe we don't really know? Maybe this is a new idea in Canada? We're all here to explore this idea, which really came from Michael's experiences at the Informal European Theatre Meetings (IETM). Documents detailing this organization and their networking structure are available for you to look at; but Massimo Mancini, from their Board of Directors, is here to talk about the organization. From what I know, however, IETM is primarily non-hierarchical and non-bureaucratic in structure. Welcome to out of town and local guests.

The first notion to put under our hats is this idea of the individual. You are all here wearing all your hats but you are still an individual. My question then is this: how do we set up PCC and make sure there is no difference between all the people, not inequalities between participants and their ability to participate? First, we need to know who we all are here. I invite you all to introduce yourselves via a three sentence biography.

All participants introduced themselves.

Blake Brooker: One Yellow Rabbit (OYR) is now hosting the High Performance Rodeo (HPR) and Mutton Busting. I invited you all to see shows at the HPR as much as possible. OYR runs a season, creates performances, presents work, hosts a school, and produces ancillary projects such as our current radio play and this PCC initiative.

Michael Green: I've prepared an Opening Address (the full text of which is provided in the appendix of this report). I've also got comments from Brian Webb (the full text of which is also included in the appendix).

Michael Green: Thank you for coming together to embark with us at One Yellow Rabbit on what I hope will prove to be one of the grandest experiments in the evolution of Canadian contemporary performance culture. And welcome to the High Performance Rodeo. Many of you have experiences to share about networking, so please go ahead and jump in.

Break.

Blake Brooker: Often networks are hierarchical; in an instance like this, you go to a meeting and always wonder what's going on but no one will tell you. This thing, this PCC initiative, is not about that. I have information. You have information. We have to open. We have to share. We have to not guard our secrets. There seems often to be a clamp on information, In a network we could instead exchange and open up to one another.

Richard Simas: We had a situation where we wanted to form a network, but funding limitations were prohibitive. Together we spoke with the Canada Council and jointly solved the problem. In this small case, the network worked. It was an excellent network, and didn't need to be any more formal. We met. We spoke. The meeting was in an ad hoc, free flowing way – amongst interdisciplinary partners. Four years later, we've had much satisfaction – with territory and terrain to share.

Emile Morin: I remember a few years before that, some discussion at the Canada Council about the interdisciplinary program should be called (these conversations are still going on!). An important discussion was to see how people wanted to get that type of work done and how to get funding. Another big question: how do we make it seen, that kind of work? Nobody in Canada was doing interdisciplinary. It was urgent to start to say that this is really important, but there was no organized way to show it. The volume of work has shown that the practice has evolved – new way of doing theater or dance. Practices are now more fuzzy than before. The naming of things is less important now. But it works. It does work. We're opening new territory constantly.

Glenn Alteen: I come from a stricter visual arts base; in some ways the most dysfunctional network I've experienced was a visual arts network that imploded in the 1990s. But out of the falling apart of that came good things. Some other good associations/networks now exist in Vancouver. They allow you to work as a team. I work with another network, which has become a group of presenters. It's only existed for three years, though. There are many conversations over how formal it should be. If it's too loose, it can become dysfunctional. If it's too tight, it can get bogged down in bureaucracy. I think it's hard to convince funders if there are no tangible results. The value of the IETM document is to convince government and funders that there is value/benefit in a network.

Chris Dray: Became involved in 1999 in ArtsNet. Any one can join. All meetings are open. It is not incorporated. We apply for funding through incorporated members (collaborative applications). It has 150 members, who join via a Yahoo egroup. Board meetings are open too. Staff is contributed by member organizations. It's main function in information sharing. There is no private information (except for personnel records). The books are all open, and the network does not tolerate arts groups fighting among selves. A process of mediation through the network now exists through which to resolve tensions within the network. There is also a visual arts network too, with volunteer administrators who send information between networks. It is 400 strong, which provides a large lobbying/ mobilization power that is available within five minutes (via the internet). We are a very small community/microcosm. I will write a PCC report to the ArtsNet. Our structure has been focused on openness and sharing information.

Not on projects. We can't do projects together – doing that just accentuates the differences between art forms. An open network for this nation: encourage it to be an open avenue of sharing. But don't try to do anything together.

Glenn Alteen: Visual arts/Artist Run Centres couldn't get funding. So we tried to run a campaign. But it was hard. ECHO listserve was the result. As there were no pressing issues, the network waned. But when there was an issue, things worked well re strategy, etc..

Chris Dray: One of our major problems after five years is that the network is now project information sharing rather than discussion re strategy, etc. I get 20 to 30 emails a day detailing events.

Andrew Laurenson: Each person will contribute to a network as they need. "Popstart" was created to foster the growth of interdisciplinary work in Canada. It's getting harder to define that interdisciplinary component because dancers are making theatre, theatre artists are dancing.... What is interdisciplinary work? Who gets to join "Popstart"? Each company defines their art for themselves, with pretty loose definitions. The "Popstart" web site was up in December, 2003. We don't have a listserve aspect planned. It's more like a yellow pages. We are still discovering what it should be. We are also concerned about how to administer/fund/manage the site: member funds as in IETM? How would PCC be administered? Who will manage it? How will it survive? "Popstart" could potentially become part of PCC??? The site is bilingual. Visit it at www.popstart.ca.

Rafik Sabbagh: IETM's central office is in Brussels. They have four full-time staff and are funded by European government. The host of meetings get to publicize what's happening in their own city and to talk about the politics in the country and how they affect the arts/artists. IETM is committed to being informal. It is not a marketplace. When I first started going to IETM I was naive because I wanted to market. Transatlantique hosted a conference in 2001 in Montreal during FIND. The subject was: Networking of cultural policies and independent initiatives. Thirty-one professionals attended, including Sandra Bender and Milton Tanaka from Canada Arts Council. It was a concentration of international Arts Presenters. Successful marketing was happening through friendships. The conference, however, got nowhere. We're all here for the artists. I don't play the game of "I need you to buy my artist". I believe that we are all here or at IETM or wherever for the artist and to educate the public. We are a big country with a lot going on and we don't have time to communicate. But meetings like IETM are great because we get to meet and to share our ideas, our frustrations, etc.. We all basically have the same problem: money!

Denise Clarke: why do we feel the need to define something like a network? We don't try to define friendship. It just is. You desire it. It supports you. It is intangible, but the benefit is there. We need a lot of space at the same time that we need to know that each other is out there. I suggest that we don't try to define "network" or to put "rules" in place.

Chris Dray: I've attend many meetings to get information. All of you have done wonderful, creative things. I need to talk to you. Everything I need to know to be successful is in your brains. I just need to get to know you.

Break

Session One (continued)

Agenda Topics:

Mr. Massimo Mancini, Artistic Director of Sosta Palmizi and long-time member of IETM and other European Networks

Discussion Summary:

Blake Brooker: Welcomed back to the meeting. We have some housekeeping to take care of. Please submit your flight/travel receipts to Michele [Decottignies, archivist]. Also, please fill out your ticket order form for the HPR. And note, too, that we haven't written in stone an agenda for this PCC meeting. Now I'd like to introduce Massimo Mancini from Italy/IETM.

Massimo Mancini: Thank you for inviting me here. It's a pleasure/honor. I came here with the same attitude as at IETM. To share information! I will give you my personal experience about several networks in which I participate:

IETM is the mother of all networks! It was born in 1981 in Italy, in a small village of only 5,000 people. The political situation in Europe motivated this network. In 1971, the first election for the European parliament was held. European artists felt the need to be less isolated. A prominent artist died and created a fund to pay for travel between Northern and Southern Italy. In 1977, a festival was created in Italy to present local non-professional artists. The festival grew to include artists from outside of Italy, which was known as a center for more traditional theater. But this festival presented more original work. Initially, the festival didn't use the term network in the name. It was created out of the need to share information through informal meetings throughout Europe. The festival has since created space and opportunity for other networks, festivals, choreographers, etc.. The local effect of this group of artists was very important for the growth of IETM.

What is IETM now? There is a big discussion about the name: what each term means and represents:

- (1) **Europe:** there are more than European members; but the network exists with the European context.
- (2) **Theatre:** by necessity, the term brings up the aspect of language and the several types of English spoken within the network. There are nine people from nine different countries speaking nine different types of English on IETM's Board. The meaning of

words becomes very important. What does "theatre" mean? Is dance theatre and so on? "Theater" is not working for the IETM. It even affects the ability to get funding because dance companies can't get funding to attend theater meetings, for example.

- (3) **Informal:** IETM has a central office., a staff, a Board of twenty members, and a daily board who are closer to the day to day business. The structure is formalized, but the practice is still informal because people come to meet as individuals.
- (4) **Meeting:** this term has changed in IETM over the last three years. IETM has three defined units (1) Communication and Training, which promotes IETM ideas, hosts the web site, produced and distributes publications; (2) the Project Unit: IETM can do some projects – meta projects – that are searching to create new contexts in which networking can exist; (3) Meetings Unit: hosts two plenary meetings each year which all can attend. The next plenary is in April in Budapest. The second in 2004 is in Serbia. How are plenary meetings organized? They are completely informal. People go there and create their own paths. But IETM provides opportunities to meet and discuss subjects via panel discussions (e.g. around cultural identity) and small subject meetings. We also offer workshops on specific subjects to move the knowledge from old to new. And there is La Piazza: an informal place where people can present a project/idea but not an institution. There are three la Piazzas at one time where artists are sharing information on projects. The key is that people get the information first hand through meeting together.

I will relate IETM to the Mongolia analogy. In Mongolia, two people will change their paths, and go many miles out of there way, to meet each other so that they can get information from each other. People have a need to know what's going on directly from the other people.

IETM's budget covers four staff in the office, projects, and meetings. Forty percent of the annual budget comes from memberships. We have more than 400 members from 40 countries who pay a membership fee according to their own budgets. The remainder of our funding is from a grant from the EU. We then give out many grants to artists to cover traveling costs for them to attend meetings.

IETM is not for making a sale.

Michael Green: The efficacy of IETM really comes down to the individual's ability to interact with the environment. Wallflowers may find this kind of environment more challenging. But at first you go to get to know people. Then by your second or third meeting you have more of an idea of what is going on and how to be part of it.

Massimo Mancini: What happens between plenary meetings? There is a continued flow of information. We host satellite meetings (much like this PCC gathering). We tend to the day to day business. We get emails from members. We maintain the web site and add information

directly to it.

Massimo Mancini: IETM's focus is: Less marketing. More information. What's the role of the board? To decide the subject of each meeting to represent the interests of the members.

How IETM is governed: board members create working groups with a mix of members. There are working groups within the board. All groups have a mix of geography and experience. They are elected informally, the old board nominates the new one and the new board is presented at a plenary. Members are asked what they think. Participation is completely voluntary. Board members pay their own travel costs.

IETM's official languages are English and French, but people help each other interpret.

IETM challenges? IETM was formerly incorporated in Belgium to provide a formal structure. The main challenge was in defining the organization: is this a market or not? Once we had too many members from one area – the Board was mostly French. This created some discord. IETM created units to address these types of crises and to handle/allow for expansion. What's changed since in IETM? It was too small of a family, too close. The members experienced a loss of power. The meetings were not so open. People had the impression that it was too close. Like a mafia. But new generations are not so interested in this kind of power. The structure and the intent is now much more open.

Andrew Laursen: What are IETM membership fees?

Michael Green: OYR, for example, has joined IETM for \$400 Euros.

Massimo Mancini: Unaffiliated artists can also attend. What do they pay? First, people can come to meetings without being a member of IETM. They just pay \$50 Euros. Independent artists can access IETM's mobility fund. All new members are presented at each meeting and the Board's responsibility is to tend to them, explain the meetings to them, and to make them welcome.

Allan Boss: the CBC would be interested in helping PCC members communicate across the country.

Andrew Laursen: these channels already exist through CBC Radio 3 and Zed. Maybe we can create an off-shoot of one of those through which PCC members can communicate?

Massimo Mancini: But meeting together is the only way to really share information and to be shocked and surprised for something you were not expecting or weren't looking for.

Chris Dray: I would like to be part of a network that I can participate in and not be tied to my job; where I can be an individual who doesn't know anything. IETM is a network of individuals. I want to be able to talk with others without the threat of having ideas taken or

without being asked for something. Is there that sense of safety in IETM?

Massimo Mancini: Absolutely.

Michael Green: Maybe there can be mobility funds in Canada; that's one of the important topics we need to address. One of our biggest challenges is the size of our country. Email limitations can be overcome only if you know the person you are communicating with. If we have a hope of surviving, the various funding agencies must find something of value in this initiative. The benefits of us meeting each other in the various environments we have in Canada – those benefits will be great. My question is then: Is there any will among funding agents to imagine how they might help us?

Break

Session Two

Agenda Topics:

What are the tangible/intangible benefits of a network?

Discussion Summary:

Blake Brooker: In keeping with informal sensibility, we didn't formulate a hard agenda. But we now need to figure out what this organization could be about, if in fact we need one. Before we go on, let's have our new arrivals introduce themselves.

New guests introduced themselves.

Blake Brooker: What are the specific needs of current organizations that existing networks/organizations are not tending to?

Robin Poitras: Six or seven years ago I spoke with Brain Webb, Elaine Bowman and others to talk about dance touring. There were only a couple of dance festivals in Canada; so opportunities for presenters to see work is limited. For example, what's going on in the Prairie Region? That work is not getting to a venue where presenters can see it. And audience too. With some of the stuff that is going on, there is a need to coordinate and/or create awareness of what's going on. Can we line up dance festivals via a natural tour? We don't know what's going on in the prairies? A lot of the work that's happening in the prairies doesn't fit into a "traditional" context/venue. PCC could be about creating an opportunity to take work from one context to another.

NEEDS

- a touring network for dance-based multi-disciplinary work
- support/venues/residency for emerging multi-disciplinary artists
- ways to reduce isolation and increase connectivity (to feel connected from coast to coast)
- travel resources

- communication across the country
- ways to foster community on local and national levels
- collaboration
- diversity in the work and in participating artists/presenters/administrators
- regionalism (where you are geographically via province, city or part of city)
- to create a think tank/window to look through and see things/mirror
- a pedagogy of creativity
- education - of both audience and media
- imaginative facilities
- research and development

ISSUES

- disciplinary definitions (especially in relation to funding)
- inter-generational mentoring and monitoring
- cultural survival techniques
- advocacy
- best practices
- artistic/administrative training and development
- artistic vision

Tangible issues are addressed, not resolved.

Ann Brophy: We hosted a meeting of eight artists. What came out of that meeting was a need to be connected for touring, for administration, for information, for support, and for funding sources; we don't have a provincial network in ND.

Blake Brooker: OYR goes to small places for funding instead of the big ones, where you can't define the work or where you have to mold it to their definitions/criteria. It's more important to make local connections in your community with small businesses.

Glenn Alteen: The Association of Artist Run Centers fell apart because of huge fights in they system over communication around an organization to address race issues across Canada. This network was organized from the top down.

Blake Brooker: Performance creation is anything that's created by people for people.

Ken Gass: I look at our list of needs and issues and I shudder; none of it interests me whatsoever. There is always a need to learn about what is going on elsewhere (e.g. via internet). But I don't want to create another PACT to talk about how to find gas money (practical/survival issues). What never gets talked about at these meetings is the art. How do you create? Who do you want to go to an island with? What others are doing? Trying to create that genuine, creative think tank... I like models like that, where artists can really tip toe into the water and find out about the arts. How do you create something that examines the art form?

Massimo Mancini: When you talk about the art it can become very boring without actually seeing the work. It may be more beneficial to provide a forum for critical discussion of artistic practice.

David Oiyee: How does a network, which will be an exchange of critical issues, address pragmatic functions without being another PACT?

Massimo Mancini: IETM creates a forum where both aspects (practical and aesthetic) can be addressed.

Michael Green: We have to reflect on practical issues when considering aesthetic opportunities. We need to set up an environment in which we can reflect in relaxed yet passionate atmosphere. I come with an idea of why I should be in the network; but I gain the opportunity to be open to anything happening. It sounds like how needs and issues can be housed in PCC is that the people are motivated by their desires and interests (rather than practical concerns). Curiosity can house needs and issues. Use needs and issues as inspiration that gets fused with desire. If we get bogged down in the practical it's not fun! But in the end it's about the art.

Paul Reich: I would like to thank Michael and Blake for bringing us together. This has been a very interesting discussion. It was useful for me as a funder to hear how the IETM structure benefits European artists and how it might work in Canada.

When I was the General Manager of a touring dance company, it would have been helpful to access ideas through something like IETM. Artists and arts administrators sometimes work in isolation so a network that can provide ideas, discussion, and direction would have been useful to me.

Prior to starting in government, I had been either working as an artist or arts administrator since my early teens, so I have great empathy for the efforts that artists make. As we were on the road much of the time I was only vaguely familiar about arts politics. I had more immediate issues to deal with, like how to make payroll for twelve artists in any given month. When I became part of the arts funding process it was a bit of a surprise to discover that, in the eyes of some members of the arts community, I was now the "enemy".

How and why communication problems arose between artists and funders is a question that bothered me. Some artists have expressed that they feel powerless to influence policy. It is noteworthy that the Yukon network [of which Chris Dray spoke] was successful in building unity within that arts community and was able to affect policy.

Almost every sector in society (health, energy, transportation, education) has developed sophisticated means by which to share information, create partnerships, set standards, foster

public awareness and speak to public policy. Any forum that can further provide the arts community with useful information to assist with artistic, administrative, or constructive policy initiatives can only be a good thing. Ultimately, is not regional and national cultural development “the common goal”?

Steve Schroeder: PCC could be different. Part of why the artists aren't involved in lobbying is because the more organized companies have become the more they are agents of the government. Funders can't give the money directly to artists (only to arts administrations) because artists can't be “trusted”. Theater is managed by administrations, not artists. PCC could be the funding agent. PCC doesn't now fit in to existing “categories”, but it could create opportunities for artists that don't now exist.

Paul Reich: That is a perception more than reality, that performance creation/non-traditional projects do not get funding. A forum like PCC could correct those impressions.

Break

Session Two (continued)

Agenda Topics:

What are the tangible/intangible benefits of a network?

Discussion Summary:

New arrivals introduced themselves.

Blake Brooker: Can we add now to needs/issues? We'd like tomorrow to start talking about if we are going to have another PCC meeting; if we are going to imagine what PCC is going to be like, and we are going to meet again, what will we do?

Chris Dray: Advocacy; if a network starts to work in the future it may be more outward looking and take on an advocacy function. Discern some themes/topics for each meeting. Make sure there are people among us with expertise to offer. Stay within the theme. We may need to somehow write it down/capture it. If you become a trusted source of information for government, then they will begin to rely on us. That really is the synthesis of what the community is feeling about something. Government can then go back to the network for consultation with members. Advocates vs. lobbyists.

Andrew Laursen: Should we add audience/media education to our list?. Audiences don't know what they are going to get out of a performance creation. They don't know what kind of expectations to bring to the performance.

Robin Poitras: our relationship with audience is very integral to our work.

Gerry Thurston: part of this whole change around that happened for me was the Survivors of the Ice Age symposium. It presented new vocabulary, created new works, and created the

environment for it. We saw the performance then talked about what the creator/performers/actors addressed: what it was and how they created that performance. Pedagogy. Thinking about creative thinking can be a function of PCC. A pedagogy of creativity – add it to our list. How we can expand the vocabulary/experience? Add it to our list too. For me there are key phrases: forces on the artists. Artists on the forces. That was the center of that sphere of participation. Being able to talk with people who create new works.

Blake Brooker: PCC could and should include all shareholders: media, writers, academics, etc.. We are involved in a wild partnership. We change our hats several times in our lives. There doesn't have to be a dark side. Please read the IETM Manifesto.

Ken Gass: PCC could provide information exchange on different levels.

Claude Schryer: I think PCC could also address best practices; the notion of best practices.

T Crane: We are immobilized if we have fear of somebody stealing my idea. Why not share the table scraps instead of fight for them? We seem to have trust issues. How do we open up and trust one another?

Massimo Mancini: Who cares if someone steals an idea and does it in another country? You have to reliberate the idea. It won't be the same idea. Then who cares; there are always more ideas.

Steve Schroeder. You have to trust the strength of your own vision for your own idea. If we are going to put an idea forward, and someone else thinks they understand it and tries to do it, it often sucks. Trust your own vision. Put it out there. Take the risk of finding out if it's going to work or not.

Lou-Ann Neel: Best practices, artistic development, trust, and sharing is important in the First Nations community. Peer dialogue is not happening in this country the way it should be. People's understanding of First Nations' art is going to educate and create larger understanding in the community at large.

Claude Schryer: What about artistic vision? What is an artistic vision? What is the role of art in society? How does art affect our lives? How does an artistic vision drives us? It is influenced by our values.

Blake Brooker: In our society in Calgary, we are home to ugly suburbs. To live in a city like this with its vast ugliness. What are the strategies and tactics to draw people away from the mall? This is our vision at OYR: we want to bring people down to make connections with each other. The people who connect with each other, the fellowship that they make, diffuses the urge to open fire! It's part of the way we justify living here sometimes.

Michael Green: We decided this year to not produce a season brochure. We hosted a launch party instead. Our audience got an opportunity to see the community they are part of – the most vibrant community in Calgary. It worked great. There was no admission fee. We built community, showed the community who it was.

David Oiyee: Buddies in Bad Times does a season kick-off party – we have for five years now.

Blake Brooker: Tomorrow we'll copy you the IETM Manifesto and this list of issues. We meet at 11:30am tomorrow. And may engage in group exercises in imagining what the next meeting will look like, what we'll do there. Before we go, is there anything to say now:

The idea of cultural centers. We may be thinking small potatoes with PCC. Why not think bigger? Infrastructure? Venues and a different thinking about what they are.

January 10 Session Three

Agenda Topics:

Welcome back to the PCC Inaugural Meeting. What does our community need in a network?

Discussion Summary:

The new arrivals introduced themselves.

Michael Green: A network is a facilitating structure, an organism. It is a way of organizing rather than an organization. It is the flexibility, the approach, the process, the mentality of a network which creates its special added value. A network is a synergy, it is the multiplying effect itself. A network is a part of the civil society which takes place in the public space. Networking is an organic development which evolves from the need of individuals to make contact, to exchange and to work together. The energy, information and power of a network flows horizontally and from the bottom up.

Blake Brooker: A network can be part of an ongoing construction of civil society. It is necessary and totally possible and we can do it here. Ourselves. Massimo talked about his personal experience. Here is ours at OYR. Our approach/ethic is to put FUN at the top of everything we do. Part of what our ability to have lived in and worked in Calgary is this: we have defined for ourselves what success means. We have been in the process of defining that continually over the past twenty-three years. And failure too. How do we deal with it? What does it consist of? What's in between? For us, having found ourselves outside of a context, isolated, we've had to make one ourselves. But associations and possibilities exist. I propose now, as we evolved this notion of PCC and the network, that we consider the elements of its success? The intangibles. Then, alternatively, we can look at the failure of it. If we look toward

the success, then maybe we can find the process of it.

Denise Clarke: In creating OYR's Summer Lab Intensive I knew that I wanted to have a laboratory space where artistic sciences could come together. In setting it up, it was like a party. I organized it the way I would organize a party interaction, comfort, stimulation, food, drink, no fighting opportunities, their own conversations. Three weeks. Another important element: no kind of scheduling. Artists are coming to create work; there is no schedule. Let's just put it up and let them fill it in. There has never been one problem with an absence of a schedule. It's been elegant. It's success has been not unlike a swell party, instead of "we got a lot done". Yet it was very efficient. We are afraid of the fear of failure; but what about the value? By setting up an organization that we want to succeed, we might be creating a safe bureaucratic entity. But PCC needs to serve artists and the space for failure. Let's not just do what we know will succeed. Space for risk!

Eric Moscopedis: Success to me means that so long as I'm not f**king anyone over and I am enhancing the success of others, my success should inspire those around me.

Andrew Laurenson: Longevity will be a sign of success, where other people are brought into the fold.

Chris Dray: If it's going to exist pragmatically, then we'll need broad based participation. A network provides some value to the individual's life. If not, you are not going to contribute to it or put the effort in that is required. If PCC provides real value, then people will participate. You can say "we are many". The second measure of success is that funders help us overcome geographical barriers.

Blake Brooker: And the funders are not "they". They are equal partners.

Eric Rose: I appreciate the idea of inclusiveness and openness. PCC should welcome people in.

Heather Redfern: I attended an IETM meeting, but it didn't work at all. Catalyst Theatre wasn't a presenter, we were a producer. But at that IETM meeting, presenters and producers were divided into separate groups and this created a disparity. PCC should promote the idea of equality and generosity, which creates inclusiveness.

Massimo Mancini: She's right. The idea is to create argument where people can meet and discuss. IETM discussed it's mistake at the meeting and took steps to correct it.

LouAnn Neel: First Nations can come in to the network and connect with other artists. This will reduce isolation and help us to get information out. So artists can reach out and get the information by connecting with other artists in other disciplines. By the way, in our culture, the low man on the totem pole is actually the highest ranking. It is a visual work of honor!

Gerry Thurston: I'd like to have an evolution where there is a hub of people whose shared interests/pedagogy/concerns about keeping culture alive and vital in this country are central. Have a hub that grows and grows and keeps expanding out to become fully inclusive. A collaborative, conception framework/model. It does not become a fixed, conceptual thing; the meaning of it grows out of the input of all people in it. A true democratic model where emphasis is on the individual. Rather than the categories. Inclusive. Collaborative. Openness to have anyone who wants to be part of it.

Michael Green: People come to a network like IETM bringing themselves, discovering what people ask and what they want of them. We should give that to them openly. When they leave the meeting, it creates it's own energy that is a benefit to everybody and all the facets of our artistic industries. E.g. new ideas for whose work I'd like to watch, for who I'd like to share a tour with, for funding, etc.. More educated and more familiar what who is doing things in the country. To select a jury of peers. To refresh a curriculum....

A wellness virus that is propagated by collaborative activity!

Blake Brooker: An element of PCC's success would be if the gatherings provided a kind of information, or streams of information, that touch into the pragmatic and the esoteric. And values. What do you value? What's important and what's not? When I hear what's important to someone else, it energizes my consciousness, elevates me. We are in the process of constructing a civil society. This is a place where people can come in and feel they are just the same as everyone else. What's different between what we're trying to create and what we are engaged in? A network is not a temporary project. There is some practicality to it. How to make this a long term thing. Is there a need? Do you feel a hunger and a desire for a development of what you haven't had so far.

Michael Green: Remember the Mongolian metaphor. The reasons they cross the street to meet and talk in the middle is because they feel lonely and crave information and contact. Festivals and events aren't doing it for me. I can't give as much as I feel I want and am not getting what I crave. IETM was more inclusive, more generous, more open than anything. The festival/work was secondary. I was in a room full of people who all knew the process of openness and sharing.

Blake Brooker: There is no bonspiel of artistic industry. PCC could be a festival that takes place in the head and between people. Social. Civil. It takes 3 times to get it (as in IETM meetings). PCC could be profoundly "communitarian". A collaborative community. A stimulation. You come back feeling like you're full inside. But should we avoid doing this around a big festival – where a lot of business happens? Because they are not providing the environment that we are wanting. How do we cultivate the environment we want?

Massimo Mancini: IETM sets meetings in a place, then sees the work of the place. Sometimes the work is organized not by a company but by a coalition of companies. IETM is not

connected with festivals. The performances that are on are not the main thing.

Rafik Sabbagh: I do both types of meetings. Paris tried to do a formal market. It didn't work. People didn't want to wear the badges. Didn't want to do it the American way. Bonds formed and people meeting are what works.

Massimo Mancini: At the end of IETM, we don't judge good meeting or not. Just "we had fun".

Christine Cook: I can't take a train to Banff. It's easier to get around in Europe. It would be an efficient use of resources to tie a PCC meeting to a festival, because we're going there anyway.

Heather Redfern: Here's a practical solution - have the meeting before or after a festival. Stay a few days later or come a few days earlier.

Michael Green: I feel it's a waste of opportunity not to have it with a festival. It makes sense. We're doing this meeting during a festival but it hasn't seemed strange.

Richard Simas: But people who travel are established producers/presenters. Who do we stay inclusive then?

Heather Redfern: A festival is a magnet for others: teachers, students, etc. Those networks come anyway. We could easily include them in PCC – in both sets of activities.

Chris Dray: But tying meetings to events could highlight segregations in the disciplines. If we go to a dance festival, what about people from other disciplines? PCC meetings might draw the discipline of the festival.

Blake Brooker: Unless the festival has other events going on that are drawing other disciplines.

Michael Green: If Ottawa was to invite us in June with CanDance festival. The Steering Committee for that festival is multi-disciplinary and responsible for inclusiveness.

Eric Moscopedis: You could choose twenty artists from across Canada, and the provincial representatives are sent via PCC from all disciplines. Those representatives could be decided amongst each region, from all disciplines. Then you perform all work at the meeting.

Ken Gass: Piggybacking may not work because the people who make the effort to go have a need to go. They define why they make the trip. Maybe the needs of a festival and a PCC meeting are not the same?

Richard Simas: We run venues in big cities. This creates a huge vacuum on what goes on elsewhere. Trying to do an event outside these big festival doesn't work because all companies are gearing up for the festival. Festivals push everybody toward one direction. It causes a problem

for venues with season programming. The negotiation for artists, public, media gets complex. Heather Redfern: It comes from need. Who needs this network? For example: Vancouver artists feel isolated and have a hard time reaching out to the rest of Canada. Who needs a network? That answer informs where the meeting is held and whether or not it happens around a festival.

Emile Morin: Don't focus on one thing, be inclusive. Major venues and festivals are not an issue for us as in Montreal. The Alliance of Media Arts meets every year, not around a festival. The groups in Quebec organized many things to present – as much as possible. I'm not sure we need a festival to see work. We could show work; have local groups involved in the organization of PCC and to show more work.

Claude Schryer: Meetings can be organized around other kind of events and gatherings than festivals. PCC is also not necessarily just one thing. It can be a small part of many things.

Massimo Mancini: IETM never meets around a festival because the host can't put those two things together. Plus, then you are not at IETM for other reasons. You are there meet to meet.

Rafik Sabbagh: What's fun about IETM is that it's hosted in a different city each time. it's like going to a different museum each time. You see the culture of the place.

Massimo Mancini: The next IETM meeting in Budapest. You'll see a new country. IETM's project units are creating new contexts in new regions. About 400 "delegates" attend plenary meetings.

Blake Brooker: What's the scale? 400 IETM:40 Canada?

Gerry Thurston: If not major festivals, how about minor events to go alongside PCC meetings. Bring together a group of people who come for that purpose. I have about a half dozen years in European experience. People there come of their own volition, not of a lack of money. There is a passion for culture and the arts, and to see/participate in the evolution of culture. One big gathering plus satellites. Can link to a hub where IETM provides the base.

Emile Morin: I've never been to ITEM but we need to talk about language too. It changes the conversation – the level of conversation that can occur – language barriers. If you want to gather, language is an issue. I'm curious of the ideal situation of IETM. Is the level of people who come are more the local people (because of lack of funds)? That's why you move the meetings?

Massimo Mancini: IETM is really pushing mobility. All the money is for traveling costs. We are really oriented to travel. Go to Onthemove.org. It's full of ways to find money to travel. In twelve years with IETM I've never paid my own travel.

Michael Green: I can't help but feel that I get such pleasure from observing art. If we don't have a performance aspect it's like going to a great meal without wine. It's so easy to understand why we shouldn't tie PCC meetings to big festivals. Lesser events are very major events in smaller communities. If we were to go to Whitehorse during the Storytelling Festival, you don't have to spend all day at the site. A PCC meeting there would be a good thing. We'd shine a light on that work.

Heather Redfern: My reason to attend a festival is to see shows: about 35 in seven days. I miss the opportunity to meet/talk with the artists. PACT meetings aren't around work and I hate that. I want to be able to see some work.

Sherri Yoon: It also seems like there are only five festivals in Canada we should avoid. If a PCC meeting is coming to town, organizers in the host city could organize some presentation. These presentations often only happen in major centers. What about the smaller places and exposure for their artists?

Richard Simas: We need to consider how PCC will move around.

Gerry Thurston: I like the term "showcase".

Lou-Ann Neel: It reminds me of the Bella Bella Canoe event. Artists came by canoe. The organizers kept it very flexible; they didn't want to put a meeting schedule into place. Artists found each other, and their networks, and organized events amongst themselves. In the ten years that followed, there's been a good balance of how the Canoe Society meets. Invites get extended to come to a community for over two years. Local groups are invited to create showcases. I think it's a very nice, flexible model. There is no central organizing committee or body. It has the same principles as the Potlatch. Business is the smallest part. You just gather the people.

Andrew Laurenson: I am curious about the "who".

Michael Green: Performance creation for me means work that is performed by the artists that created it. PCC then is the environment and the ecology in which that work happens.

Blake Brooker: Creating a performance can be anything and those tied to it in any way.

Roger Gaudet: Going back to whether or not to target major festival or cities, consider what would be a win-win situation. There are at least a dozen events that could work for PCC meetings. That's the valuable part – interaction with the artists, producers, presenters. Look at the example of Storytelling Festival. How do we get people up there? Host a pcc meeting there.

Michael Green: You're talking about a nation-building initiative!

Blake Brooker: About the creation of a civil society!

Roger Gaudet: Exactly! Canadian culture is young, only fifty years. We are still thinking/talking about that.

Claude Schryer: Defining PCC is important. The term is still new for many. I have to think about it. It's embryonic. It has to be debated, rather than defining it. But if you don't define it, we won't fund it.

Break

Session Three (continued)

Agenda Topics:

What does our community need in a network?

Discussion Summary:

Claude Schryer:

There are three things I want to talk about, then I'll give you my observations and address the possibilities for funding. First, thanks to OYR, Michael and Michele for organizing this meeting.

In 1999, I was hired to revise the interdisciplinary work and performance art program. I was asked to consult interested parties on defining the difference between interdisciplinary work and performance art and how to develop this area. Out of those consultations, we created the Inter-Arts Office. There are three categories in Inter-Arts Program: performance art, interdisciplinary work and new artistic practices, including community based practices, for both creation and presenting activities. Our budget is comparatively small at \$1.5 million. We have existed for four years and are still making adjustments.

We also support multi-disciplinary festivals, which involves three or more disciplines presented within an event, often linked by a theme, for example, as an Asian Arts Festival.

Part of my job with the Inter-Arts Office is to look at issues, engage in dialogue and look for solutions in the field of multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary arts. We respond to, and work with the artistic community. Here are a few of our recent initiatives programs: Off The Radar, which advances critical thinking in inter-arts practices; The Artists and Community Collaboration Fund, which addresses how to better support professional artists who work with communities in a process of engagement; and Art and Science and how they related to each other such as the Artists in Residence for Research Program that was developed in partnership with the National Research Council (NRC).

It's about interconnection and how to be strategic about creating connections. Networking

groups get together because there are practical reasons, but also to get to know each other, to leave your speciality behind and seek what you have in common. To seek the greater good. This meeting has been funded by three federal departments: Canada Council Outreach Office and Inter-Arts Office and the Canadian Heritage. For future applications an organization can apply through the Outreach or for an Inter-Arts Program dissemination grant for aspects of an event. We are thinking about how we can better fund informal gatherings such as PCC.

Roger Gaudet:

Whatever you do with PCC, be aware that it's not being born in a void. There is a lot going on in the country in the field of networking and exchanges. The discussions here are on the right track, discussing the right things. The department of Canadian Heritage is interested in consulting the community. What you are doing is informing the understanding the department has of the field. These are interesting times in both the development of the arts and in terms of government: there is a lot going on now. A lot of what's going on deals with issues around funding. However, if we want to understand why funding is structured the way it is we have to look at the evolution of the arts to explain why government money is like it is.

In 1957, the Canada Council was created and has since been instrumental in the growth and development of the producing arts community. In the 1960s there was lots of money and the Canada Council supported the creation and consolidation of institutions in the various art forms. These institutions see themselves as the foundation of the arts in this country. In the 1970s, there was a new generation, that was focussed on Canadian work, and the CC funded these. They see themselves as the foundation of Canadian arts - Canadian creation rather than Canadian production. In the 1980s, funding opened up to some new companies, but mostly it consolidated the new generation, which professionalized its structures, adding administrative support, etc. In the 1990s, we had to diversify again with a wider openness to aboriginal arts, and new cultural influences and inter-disciplinarity. In 2000, after the financial difficulties of the 90s the focus has been on consolidation funding - and stabilization funds.

Around the producing community has grown a presenting community, which though it was always present, grew hugely post 1967. This presenting community was not necessarily showing Canadian work. To stimulate the presenting of the work of the Canadian arts producers, a number of things were put in place. The Touring Office of the Canada Council in the early 70s, and in the mid 70s to mid eighties a number of festivals. In 1986, Canadian Heritage comes along with a program to support festivals. Why? because the festivals were often outside of the Canada Councils disciplinary fields, and the council did not pursue these responsibilities, choosing rather to concentrate on consolidating the two divergent generations competing for funds in the world of production.

What's coming up now and how does PCC fit? Government funding on a federal level goes through two sources: either the Canada Council or Canadian Heritage. Competition is tough in both. There are now many more companies, artist-run centers, festivals, and arts-service organizations. This means that there are many things begging for travel money right now ? festivals, meetings, associations... Just on the presenting side, there are eleven contact events in

Canada. (The US has only five).

The Canada Council and the department of Canadian Heritage is asking themselves: does this country have to do everything? Does PCC have a place? Artists don't have travel money, however other organizations exist. But if PCC goes through the process of articulating what it can deliver (e.g. dialogue) the funding bodies can justify money. We are open to you telling us about the arts community's need to talk about "this" or the presenting community's need to talk about "that". But the Canada Council has priorities and PCC must make a link to a priority. Canadian Heritage also has priorities and PCC must make a link to those. Remember artistic dialogue is good, but that's the Canada Council, and they are okay with presenters being there to provide access to what's going on which Heritage can be involved with. There is a lot going on in this country, but few Canadians see it. Both agencies are concerned about that.

But a large percent of Canada Council funding goes into fifteen centres. Canadian Heritage funds go beyond that into other cities (presenters give access but they need to access artists). An important thing for PCC is the role it can play linking artists and presenters. Canadian Heritage funds over 550 presenters all over the country in two groups; specialized (those who know something about a particular part of the arts) and multi-disciplinary (who could learn more about the arts). Any time you can bring artists together to talk about the arts is good for the art form and probably valuable to the Canada Council. There is a big learning curve for presenters (not specialized presenters like OYR, but multi-disciplinary, regional organizations). There is a huge thirst for dialogue from the non-specialized presenters. If PCC can link non-specialized and specialized presenters, both the funders may be interested. But we need you to deliver concrete activities with outcomes in terms of: Gathering together the artists and presenters; Generational inter-connectiveness, it has to go beyond those in place, lots of players - not the same old boys, lots of topics - as there is a diversification of both the form and the artists practicing the form.

PCC should work from its strengths: the expertise for getting English Canadian work into Europe, for connecting with western US, and for making Asian pacific/Australian connections. Those are the cards you can play now.

PCC should seek to be inclusive and it must define its constituency: Who are your types of players? For example PACT = administrators, PCC = whom? You must seek a positive mix: performers, creators, critics that will stimulate the discourse, academics, language, demographics and yet will allow the meeting to be practical and useful. Don't forget the discourse of the artists ? what's going on, what are the connections between the regions, what's the critical mass?

Remember: Artists can access Canada Council funds, presenters can access Canadian Heritage funds.

Claude Schryer: We have a comprehensive report from the Inter-Arts Office - a four year report. If you want a copy, email me.

Roger Gaudet: All this development mirrors the evolution of cultural policy. In the 1960s policy was about everybody having access to a pre-established type of arts (e.g we have to have a ballet company, opera, theatre company - and anyone should be able to buy a ticket). In the 1970s we moved to a democratization of the arts; going beyond working in established institutions - anyone could establish their company. In the 1980s, we shifted to the economic value of the arts - everyone was getting an administrator and trying to establish the economic impact of their activity. Then in the 1990s we turned to bigger thinking about the supply chain options. It was essential to have all the pieces in the ecology: small medium and large institutions, etc. Now in the 2000s we are more focused on creative communities; how they can be stronger and more attractive; the impact that arts organizations have on the quality of life in a community, how a good presenter can make a community an interesting place to live; access for Canadians; and the social cohesion aspect of the arts.

There is the Canada Council and Heritage (arts funders) and there is government. Fundamentally we must all defend the notion of government support for the arts. Canada Council and Heritage have over the years defined “this is how it works” and channeled funding into it. And it is working as we have a vibrant living arts community that is making its place in the global arts community. We defend our definitions to a government that goes through different opinions on why they invest in the arts. During the Jean Cretien/Sheila Copps years, we began by fighting the federal deficit, then in 1997 we started growing again. Now we are in the Paul Martin era. This Prime Minister is big on backbenchers participating in government so you may want to write to your MP to explain why you think the arts are important. The government needs to hear from its citizens, through their organizations and individually why it should invest in the arts. How the arts make a positive investment in the community. Suggestions as to how they should invest now that the budget is balanced. What to do next. You have to impress upon the Prime Minister the importance of the arts. We don't know what he thinks he's brand new.

Our work as a funding agency is to tell government how their investment in the arts is having an effect in this country. We try to keep them aware of the positive outcomes so they will keep investing in the arts. So far we do not know what arguments will be effective in convincing the new Prime Minister and his government of the positive impact of investment in the arts. We hope that your input will help us come up with good reasons, and that your communications with your government, will dovetail with ours. Both pieces have to be there: what the community wants and what the government should do about it.

We need to get boards to address why business is investing in the arts. We funders haven't done much work on board issues, but we are at present sending conflicting messages: on the one hand we say “you must balance your budget”; on the other we tell presenters to “be innovative. Take risks!”

Chris Dray: I've been reading about the rise of the creative class. And creative thinking is not

unique to the arts community. We are seeing creative thinking in all communities. So when we talk about a network, I think of it as creation Canada – not just as artists or presenters. I think that there needs to be greater education of supporters. Why not do that via PCC? We can easily bring together 100 artists and 100 presenters with businesses, boards, and investors. But does doing so negate funding opportunities?

Claude Schryer: The governance of arts organizations is interesting topic. What governance is needed for different types of organizations?

Michael Green: We need to break for lunch now. Dale Turri of the Calgary Region Arts Foundation will speak after lunch.

January 10 Session Four

Agenda Topics:

How do we begin to shape Performance Creation Canada?

Discussion Summary:

Blake Brooker: The question that needs to be asked is where should we go next? But maybe we shouldn't ask that. Let's do instead a three sentence observation of what we've done over the past forty hours.

New arrivals introduced themselves. Then Dale Turri spoke on behalf of CRAF.

Dale Turri: I am really delighted to have been invited to this meeting. Thanks to all the organizers. I am probably the only person here who is not at all an artist. I am an audience member and an arts lover. This type of meeting is helpful for me.

One of the things I know I am good at is volunteering having volunteered for nine years for CRAF (Calgary Region Arts Foundation). Through that I have been able to get to know just about all non-profit artists/groups in Calgary. The advantage that gives me is that I get to know the whole broad spectrum of arts – from performing to visual to literary.

That puts me in a position of being able to introduce people across disciplines. There must be people like me all over the world. Everyone has their network and you can't tell how they might be able to help if they're not invited to the party. If you can get business people in here who are interested in the arts, that would be fabulous. Networking is something that I have been a real proponent of. I hand picked a joint-arts committee with representatives from all funding levels, as well as organizations involved with arts advocacy. This committee had no agenda apart from information sharing.

What came out that information sharing was, for example, an ability to organize a facilities

forum to assist Canadian Heritage in disseminating monies they had for facilities. Getting all those people into the room to open discussion was really useful. Today we are taking with us knowledge of the members that have attended this forum and that is useful.

Find ways to continue this dialogue and to include as many people/shareholders as possible without restrictions – businesses, board members, and just people who show an interest.

Participants next shared their impressions of the meeting.

Richard Simas: I'd support a group/network that is interested in both practical and philosophical concerns; has a regularity of meetings; a disciplined regard for geography (a studied way of moving this group around the country); and language. This group would share information, be complicit; and collaborate. I am also fascinated by this thing about establishing a pretext: PCC can't be too free-form, it must be responsive to the group ethos. How do you set up the pretext in which the real things happen?

Claude Schryer: I'm leaving. Partially because I don't want to be here so you can talk among yourselves. I know I'll hear back from you (as a funder).

Roger Gaudet: I'm leaving too, but I'll be back for the closing.

Gay Hauser: As someone who is in a temporary position with an arts organization, I feel that I don't really know what I am doing in my job yet. So it's been wonderful to come here and be considered an individual. I don't have to represent my organization, but I bring with me the knowledge that it has given me. Still, I can be an individual. That is something that I hope will be the heart of PCC.

David Oiyee: I echo Richard's last point. In trying to set up a criteria, it has created a format. But I've still had opportunity to talk to other people, exchange ideas, and discuss practices. I am going away with things I wouldn't have touched upon otherwise. It's made me interested in seeing if the network continues.

Eric Rose: Blake asked me "what does your generation think?" I am only twenty-five and very much appreciate having this opportunity to be in this room with you all. I want to either go back to school or learn from the older generation in an equal environment in a place where I don't feel like a puppy dog; but rather an equal. I have enjoyed the non-hierarchy and the openness. It's such a wonderful feeling of generosity.

Andrew Laursen: I've had an emails from from Touchstone Theatre and Rumble, they have been hosting the PUSH Performance Series in Vancouver. It's small, only three to five productions. But they have invited the next PCC meeting to Vancouver next year.

Gerry Thurston: Regarding the existing PCC web site, this web site is there and is something

that I don't want for myself. I will give it to PCC. It hosts information on companies, artists, and pedagogy. It's about performance and how people create performance. The current URL is www.performancecreationcan.org. But I've also reserved www.performancecreation.ca. This site is changing over to the new URL. In the process, some pages have been lost; but the name is there and the material is there if you want to use it. So already we do have a web presence and a domain. Use it for PCC. Will Richard at OYR do it? And if so, who administers it, gets the emails, etc.?

Michael Green: That leads into a thought of mine, that we shouldn't be pushing an initiative that we aren't ready for. But do we want to pursue the concept? And, if so, what are our choices about how to imagine and actualize the next PCC meeting. Maybe it's a good idea to form a Steering Committee to design and implement the next meeting and discuss the web site?

Blake Brooker: Performance Creation Canada was initiated by Gerry Thurston and conceived by several artists. What emerged out of these conversations was the term "performance creation".

Emile Morin: I feel that I'm in the first of the three meetings I need for this to start to work for me (as in the IETM experience). I have enjoyed it. I think it's a good idea and should go forward. But I don't fully appreciate the purpose of it. The discussion we had yesterday about what PCC would do and he gave me the impression that I would try to find good reason to make this work.

LouAnn Neel: I am heading home with really good impressions, ideas, and goals. The Aboriginal communities in Canada are just embarking on some of the issues you are talking about. I am just starting at Banff with the knowledge that the absence of regional community makes it harder for us to participate at this level. I really see the opportunity for gathering like this, in whatever form, to make these kinds of connections on an interdisciplinary level. And that there is an opportunity for arts groups to come into our communities and show us what's going on. We are under pressure to catch up with our traditions and yet create new work. As we are doing catch up, PCC creates an opportunity for us to grow. There is an initiative to create an Aboriginal Arts Centre in Vancouver. We have lots of stuff to talk about. I would like to volunteer to be part of the strategic planning in the arts and would like to be on the PCC Steering Committee.

Rafik Sabbagh: It's nice to be in the west. I'm from the east. My knowledge is international, Europe, USA. All I know of Canada is the east. Not the west. I like PCC and the opportunity to see more Canada. It's neat. I enjoyed it.

Glenn Alteen: I think this is a great genesis of something. We need to go now and think about the idea of spreading the word, and of getting more representation.

Heather Redfern: To that end, I suggest we meet again in six months, informally, to cast the net more broadly. I invite PCC to Magnetic North in Edmonton for at least one more

information session.

Glenn Alteen: It's a good idea to have several information sessions in our regions and other networks, then come together again as one big group.

Blake Brooker: I feel that we are missing music representation. Spreading the net out farther is important.

Michael Green: Ann Brophy offered to host another PCC meeting, as have others. Why isn't music included? There are lots of reasons why it could be. The reason it's not now is because I didn't know how to put it in the plans. I could only find ways to include some aspects of the industry but not others. But we could go to NFLD to the Sound Symposium. I thought that would be a good opportunity to address the musical over-site. It's the first ten days in July. Magnetic North is June 9 to 19. PUSH is in January/February.

Ken Gass: There is something about theater. It is an art form that includes many other disciplines. It is an eclectic art form. There is something right for me about making this principally a theater network initially. In terms of performance and theater performance, that is very wide reaching as it is. The country is wide-spread and the music industry is very wide-spread. At some point it could become too diluted. For the first year, I would keep the theater/performance as the main link. All of us here have links to theater and performance.

Eric Moscopedis: As a young artist I think that is outrageous! In the three years that I have been presenting Mutton Busting, I hardly know any artists who define themselves in those terms. I can't think in terms of that framework. The artists of my generation do not think in terms of "theater" or "visual art". I think PCC's inclusiveness will be our future. Those terms are archaic and dated. There is no distinction in my own mind. Who do I want to present in my festival: everybody - dance artists, visual artists, musicians, etc.. People spent an entire year to define performance creation. It's key is that the individual is at the center. I think it is outrageous to exclude any person at any time. Especially because only the people who need to be there will be there.

Ken Gass: It comes down to how the artists self define. People ultimately identify what they do as performance and wanting audience interaction at some time. It's not a question of excluding. It's defining who are the people who share your needs/context.

Eric Moscopedis: It's defining culture in Canada and its about the individual.

Blake Brooker: Performance implies that there is an audience, a time, and a place. The wider the better in a way. I think what Eric said may be true. Only the people who need to be there will be there, because of the effort and resources required to get there.

Chris Dray: The Rabbit's have shown great leadership by starting this and making it happen. It will continue, they won't let it go. Thanks for that. It will continue too because you have not tried to put structure on this. In almost every case, people immediate go to structure. I felt the

whole room resisting structure. We have an underlying culture created in this room: a spirit of openness, resistance to definition and structure. How does PCC go forward? By individual commitments. I will, therefore, commit to coming to the next PCC meeting. I will make this meeting my first priority. I will also talk to five colleagues and encourage them to come to the next meeting too. We can't meet constantly to talk about what to talk about. I know we'll get to everything eventually. I am willing to participate in the dialogue via internet or whatever.

Andrew Laursen: I think we need to define it somehow. Time based is a good idea for definition.

Glenn Alteen: The concept of "time based" comes from Britain, where it means film and video. I'm not sure we can adapt that definition. I don't see this as community. I see it as the intersection of many. We shouldn't look at PCC as one community.

We all have in common that we want to share information in a spirit of openness and generosity and by the element of being surprised. What I come away with is: how do I become surprised.

Andrew Laursen: How do you advertise meetings?

Massimo Mancini: Via all networks. IETM really is independent in reality and in spirit; it resists definitions or categories of art. You cannot make these boxes. One company in IETM was described by different people as video, dance, theater, etc..

Emile Morin: Some of the work in Canada can't be described by the term of PCC.

Vicki Stroich: What is attracting me about PCC is the idea that as an artist I would meet people from other disciplines who I would learn from or create with.

Blake Brooker: My fantasy of PCC is "don't worry about what it shouldn't be". It can be loose. Whatever we want it to be. If it bugs you, leave. We don't have to have fear of organization.

Heather Redfern: It's about possibilities too. In Edmonton, we met to ask "how do we get young audience to theater?" But we didn't invite young artists. The opportunity of artists intersecting could be a possibility that otherwise doesn't exist.

Ron Jenkins: I like what Richard said right off the bat. Just listening to what is being talked about: It's about the art and what we do. I don't want to talk about administration, marketing, etc.. I want a place I can go to talk about the art. When I leave something like this that's what I want. For example, I wanted to present a show but wasn't sure how to make it work. I called Michael Green for advice and talked at him for some time about all the challenges. And his response was: Yes, it's a beautiful show. PCC is about ideas, it's about art. It's not marketing, labor costs, etc.. There is no symposium in Canada where artists can get together to talk about

the work. Listening to ideas, that's what it about isn't it?

Steve Schroeder: This idea of open sharing of information, that's radical. When you go to PACT, for example, it's so closed. When you do talk, its about administration. I love the idea that we'll get together as artists and lovers of art, that you'll discard your institution and discuss what's happening, not how. What happens, then, is that you leave way more jazzed about life than after any business meeting. Who knows what ideas will come out? If you're not buying and selling, then you might get something really wonderful. You ruin a project by forcing it to completion. If you go in with no preconceived outcome, the right people will end up there.

Art is always about breaking down a form. That's really what's interesting.

Steve Schroeder: You can also have an informal structure. You don't have to get bogged down in the how. Think about play. Any play – including the play that children do; even that contains a structure – it's unspoken; but there.

Andrew Laurensen: I'm not sure I fully understand the philosophy/practice of IETM.

Michael Green: You arrive at IETM and immediately start talking about art. Then you go to an organized session on a topic of interest to you. It's a bit more traditional: you get information and learning. Then you go back to the bar and talk about art with your new information/learning.

Massimo Mancini: IETM is up to you. There are some more formal sessions for those who want and the chance to meet with up to 400 people if you want.

Michael Green: One Yellow Rabbit is hosting a group from Holland. I met them at IETM and now they have come to Calgary to see if we like each other's posse. While they are here, we've arranged meetings. And now we will travel to their countries so we can check them out too! I suggest now, because time is moving on, that we look at a forming a Steering Committee for the next meeting. They will get together, go over these notes, talk to participants, and "plan" another meeting. Who volunteers to be part of this Committee?

Lou Ann Neel

Ann Brophy

Eric Moscopedis

Rafik Sabbagh

Gerry Thurston

Norman Armour

Eric Rose

Chris Dray

Michael Green

Sherri Young

Christine Cooke

Michele Decottignies

Andrew Laurensen

Robin Poitras

Rafik Sabbagh: What is this list for?

Michael Green: We are going to be in communication with each other and to perhaps shepherd

people to the next meeting. Our next agenda may look more like an IETM agenda.
Massimo Mancini: There the length of the meetings is three days, with structure for those who want it, plus a fourth day that is completely open. The board meeting is five days. They are at IETM to take care of the housekeeping of the meeting.

Sherri Yoon: What is shifting from this meeting to next?

Michael Green: The assembly here is trusting this Committee to come up with something to suggest. But before we get to that stage, we consult participants and consider their feedback. The host city will then take on some logistics of the meeting.

Sherri Yoon: What if it swells too much?

Blake Brooker: Chris Dray said that he would do things. I will volunteer OYR's web master's time to set up the PCC web site so we can start sharing information.

Michael Green: The Steering Committee is going to invent only the structure that we require to play together more.

Sherri Yoon: I came here feeling that I had to get something done. I appreciate the breaking down of fears and barriers. My fear comes from wanting to maintain this spirit of generosity.

Heather Redfern: I don't want to lose site of unstable and informal. I'd love to have a subversive word in the name!

Michael Green: That's a good session for next meeting: what to call this network.

Blake Brooker: It's time for us to go. Thanks for coming. Thanks Michael. Thanks Michele. Don't be afraid. Don't judge. Thanks Massimo.

Michael Green: Thank you all very, very much.

Archivist's note:

Apologies for comments attributed to the wrong speaker, comments made without recognition of the speaker, and spelling