



Arts and Culture Matter

THE ONTARIO LIBERAL PLAN

FOR STRONG CULTURAL INDUSTRIES





September 2003

Ontario has a strong, unique culture that has been enriched by a diversity of languages, histories and traditions.

Our galleries proudly display the works of home-grown artists alongside the masters of Europe, Asia and Africa. Our authors are acclaimed and translated around the world. Our dancers perform works that range from the native and folk traditions of Canada to the classical ballets of Russia and China. Our singers perform in many languages before national and international audiences.

The arts enhance our quality of life and account for an increasing share of our economic growth. Today, the most prosperous economies are those where the arts are thriving and diverse cultures comfortably co-exist.

Arts organizations, large and small, have suffered in Ontario because of chronic neglect and underfunding by a government that does not value their contribution. Paying lip service to the arts is not helping these institutions pay their bills.

The Ontario Liberals will do more than talk about the importance of the arts. We will support them so they can help us achieve the civil society and quality of life this province should offer its citizens.

We will give our arts and cultural organizations the kind of support that will unleash their creative and entrepreneurial talents, not force them to scramble daily just to keep their doors open.

We know that our arts organizations are net contributors to our provincial economy and that they give us an edge for competing in a global, knowledge-based economy. We will recognize their contribution, not treat these vital industries as a drain on our economy or force them to go begging to government for their survival.



We will listen to our arts and cultural organizations, not ignore them. We will work with them to support, promote and instill an appreciation of the arts.

This is our plan to promote the role of artists in our society and the importance of the arts in every Ontario city and town. Our plan is practical and affordable, and our investment has been accounted for in the Ontario Liberal Financial Plan.

It's time to recognize that arts and culture really do matter to Ontario.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dalton McGuinty". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dalton McGuinty
Leader of the Ontario Liberal Party

“The ability to attract creative people in arts and culture fields and to be open to diverse groups of people of different ethnic, racial and lifestyle groups provides distinct advantages to regions in generating innovations, growing and attracting high-technology industries and spurring economic growth.”

“Competing on Creativity”

Meric Gertler and Richard Florida

THE ARTS DO MATTER

- Recent Environics research shows that 92% of Ontarians reported that the arts helped enrich their quality of life.
- For every dollar of funding to the arts, the government earns back between \$1.23 and \$2.00.
- In 1996, the direct and indirect impact of Ontario’s arts and cultural industries on the province’s GDP was \$19.1 billion and over 430,000 jobs were generated.



Tafelmusik with world musicians

Listening to the Arts Community

The Eves government has stopped listening to the arts community. They have treated the arts – whether in the form of a school music program or the mounting of a major exhibit – as unnecessary frills that government should not be supporting.

Their cuts were made without consulting the organizations affected or understanding the consequences of their decision. A Liberal government will seek the advice of the arts community on support for cultural industries.

We will immediately establish a Minister's Advisory Council for Arts and Culture.

This Council will bring together arts community representatives with the Minister of Culture to create an open and ongoing forum for discussion.

Within the first two years of our mandate, this Council will produce a *Report on the Status of the Artist in Ontario in the 21st Century*. This report will be used to develop *Status of the Artist* legislation for our artists in Ontario, following the successful lead of both Quebec and Saskatchewan. It will recognize the importance of Ontario's artists and represent a new respect for their social and economic contribution.

Investing in Home-Grown Talent

The Ontario Arts Council (OAC) is the main source of support for Ontario's professional writers, painters, sculptors, musicians, composers, filmmakers, craftspeople, dancers and choreographers all across Ontario. The OAC also provides operational funding to professional arts organizations such as the Canadian Opera Company, the Ottawa Art Gallery, the Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra, and the Shaw Festival.

Investments through the OAC have helped build and strengthen our cultural institutions and our home-grown artists, creating a strong base of talented and skilled people living and working in our province.



Per capita funding to the arts in Ontario is close to the lowest in Canada, and is less than a third of what is provided by Quebec, Alberta and Manitoba.

The Eves government has slashed funding for the Ontario Arts Council. Over the period 1995-1998, the Ontario government reduced its funding to the Ontario Arts Council by 42% and then flat-lined it. Funding has remained at 1985 levels.

Meanwhile, inflation has increased by 50% since 1985 and the population of Ontario has increased by 25%. Even the recent pre-election announcement of \$15 million in funding to the OAC does not make up for the many years of underfunding and neglect.

There has also been a drastic drop in the number of our young artists who have received grant funding in order to further their professional career. Established arts organizations and individual artists cannot rely on private fundraising to make up the difference.

There is no developed country in the world that does not provide government support in some form to the arts. In Ontario, public funding is essential to sustaining cultural organizations. But in Ernie Eves' Ontario, government has abdicated its responsibility for the arts and shifted it to the private sector, leaving arts organizations short of operating funds and individual artists to fend for themselves.



We will provide stable, predictable funding based on a three-year period so that arts and cultural organizations can make sound decisions for the future of their programs.

The arts community cannot plan for long-term growth when government funding for operating expenses is uncertain or haphazard.

We will invest in the Ontario Arts Council over our first mandate.

This will help stabilize our arts and culture sector and give more of our young artists the opportunity to succeed.

We will also ensure that funding for arts organizations goes to where the need is greatest – to operational funding rather than endowments.

Large arts organizations need the same flexibility as smaller ones in determining how to use their matching funds from government. Right now, the bias towards endowments is not allowing larger cultural institutions enough room to cover their operating expenses.

It does little good to fund empty arts buildings. It is what's inside that counts. A cultural renaissance can only be achieved by focusing on the content and the talent, not just buildings that house them.



Zhuce Zeng as Lai Gwan in
"Iron Road" by Chan Ka Nin and Mark Brownell

Photographer:
Cylla von Tiedemann

HARRIS-EVES RECORD ON THE ARTS AND CULTURE: EIGHT YEARS OF DECLINE

- Since 1994, the number of grants awarded to individual artists has declined by a staggering 54%.
- Since 1994, the number of arts organizations who have received funding has declined by 36%.

Many arts organizations have been hard hit by funding cuts:

- The Art Gallery of Ontario was forced to close completely for eight months.
- The Toronto Symphony Orchestra suffered a serious artist strike and then came close to bankruptcy.
- Drastic operating cuts made by the Canadian Opera Company and the National Ballet of Canada reduced their artistic output by about half and raised ticket prices. But both organizations still incurred large accumulated deficits. This has reduced accessibility and fueled an elitist image that arts organizations have fought against for years.
- Smaller organizations were also forced to take dramatic cuts. Many fell into deficit situations, and few were able to take advantage of the matching endowment programs offered as they were struggling to raise funds just to stay alive.

Arts Education

Arts education is not a nicety; it's a necessity. It raises academic achievement in all areas, not just the arts.

A SUCCESS STORY: SHAKESPEARE IN THE SCHOOLS

The Resurgence Theatre Company is a small Ontario-based theatre group that brings its performances of Shakespeare to public schools across Central Ontario through its "ArtsReach" program. The company performs the play in a way that the students can understand, and then provides a chance for the students to meet the cast and crew, ask questions, and even become involved in a youth apprenticeship program. The Theatre Company provides a study guide for teachers and educators who are teaching the play to the students, and will return to the school to perform drama workshops on theatre subjects such as acting, directing, stage management, lighting and production.



Kristina Nicoll and Richard Zeppieri in
"Girl in a Goldfish Bowl" by Morris Panych

Photographer:
Cylla von Tiedemann

Eves' Tories have wreaked havoc on our publicly-funded school system. The arts have been one of its many victims.

HARRIS-EVES RECORD:

FEWER ARTS TEACHERS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- In 2002/03, only 41% of schools reported a full-time music teacher.
- Only 25% of schools reported a part-time music teacher.
- There are fewer visual arts and performing arts teachers and those schools that do have these educators have limited resources to introduce the arts to our students.
- There are also fewer schoolchildren attending artistic performances as there is no money for the required buses and liability insurance.

Education must challenge and inspire our kids. It must offer all students the opportunity to experience a full range of learning that includes music, art and drama. These are not frills. These are essential parts of a well-rounded education.

Arts education should not be an extracurricular activity, but an integral part of the learning experience. Our education plan, *Excellence for All*, commits to funding public schools for success. We will establish lighthouse schools to develop and showcase best practices in education, including best practices in the arts. This, together with our commitment to provide public school choice, will give our young artists more opportunities for creative pursuits while in school.

MUSIC EDUCATION:
“CROSS-TRAINING FOR THE BRAIN”

A new study published in the American Psychological Association journal (July, 2003) shows that music lessons help learning. The research conducted on 90 boys between the ages of 6 and 15 in Hong Kong schools showed that students with musical training demonstrated better memory, vocabulary and verbal skills. The longer children continued with their music training, the greater the benefits. The study's author attributes the positive effects of music training to increased stimulation of the left side of the brain, allowing it to handle other functions more effectively. “It's like cross-training for the brain,” says Agnes Chan, a psychologist at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.



Re-Investing in Our Film and Television Industry

Our television and film industry contributes directly and significantly to the Ontario economy every year. The creative talent of our own filmmakers, directors, producers and actors results in both domestic and international success, leaving imprints of Canadian culture on the international film and television scene.

Our domestic film sector has not done as well as it should have over the past few years. Because Ontario's tax credits are the lowest in Canada, our home-grown talent is choosing to film outside of Ontario in order to finance their films. New Brunswick, Manitoba and Quebec are all becoming the locations of choice for film and television production. This production should be occurring in Ontario.

The Ontario Liberals will not let our film and television industry continue to decline.

In 1999, Ontario's domestic film and television industry peaked at a \$491 million contribution to the provincial economy. It hit a low of \$380 million in 2002. In the last three years, Ontario producers have spent approximately \$710 million outside of the province, costing us 19,000 direct and indirect jobs that should have been in Ontario.



We will boost the Ontario Film and Television Tax Credit from 20% to 33%.

This tax credit will be based on eligible labour expenditures that cannot exceed 48% of total production costs and will be limited to a maximum cap per production.

We will introduce a new feature film component of the Ontario Film and Television Tax Credit and increase this credit from 20% to 40% of eligible expenditures.

Because of the unique challenges posed by creating a feature film, we need an Ontario Film and Television Tax Credit that distinguishes between small and medium-sized films and big-screen or feature films.

The amount of the tax credit will also be limited to a maximum cap per production. This will encourage our own filmmakers, directors, producers and actors to stay in Ontario. Thousands of jobs will be created. Hundreds of millions of dollars will pour into our economy.

Miracle Pictures Inc., a Toronto-based company, is currently shooting a CTV movie of the week entitled *“Zeyda and the Hit Man”*. The Toronto producer is partnering with a Manitoba producer and shooting the film in Winnipeg to access Manitoba’s enriched tax credit program and equity fund. Since this financing cannot be found in Ontario, this Toronto company is spending its budget and creating jobs in Manitoba instead of here in Ontario.

Inspiring a New Generation of Artists

The Ontario Liberals believe that our young people need more exposure to the arts and culture industry.

We will open up opportunities for apprenticeships in the arts, film and television industries to increase the flow of new talent into the arts.

These apprenticeships could be in designing and building sets, learning about photography and filmography, make-up and costume design, stage production, digital animation, managing a small arts company or apprenticing in a museum or arts organization. The Resurgence Theatre Company in Newmarket is leading the way for youth apprenticeship and already offers this kind of experience to young people interested in a career in theatre.

Young audience member at a Tafelmusik community concert at the Royal Ontario Museum



Promoting Cultural Centres

Ontario's cities are home to our signature cultural attractions. Toronto has world-renowned organizations like the Royal Ontario Museum, the National Ballet School, the Royal Conservatory of Music, the Toronto International Film Festival and Harbourfront.

There are many talented artists and acclaimed cultural attractions throughout the province. The success of the Stratford and Shaw Festivals, the London Regional Children's Museum, the Bluewater Musical Productions in Sarnia, the Lake of the Woods Museum in Kenora, the Timmins Symphony Orchestra and the Art Gallery of Sudbury are all wonderful examples.

We will work with cities to attract talented artists and entrepreneurs, as well as businesses interested in capitalizing on that talent.

Governments have been reluctant to recognize the importance of cities as cultural centres. An Ontario Liberal government will give our cities the credit and attention they are due as cultural anchors of the province and the nation.

We will encourage municipalities to develop cultural plans that highlight their arts and culture offerings and build their talent base.

Honouring Excellence in the Arts

Examples of excellence in the arts are all around us — whether it's a great book, a hit film, an original stage play, a remarkable painting or a special teacher of the arts in one of our schools.

Ontario does not do enough to recognize its artists or the contribution they make to our province. We want to change this. We believe it's important to show that arts and culture matter and to showcase our outstanding achievements.

We will establish the Premier's Medal for Excellence in the Arts. This annual award will be given to an individual or organization that has made an outstanding contribution to arts and culture in Ontario.



The National Ballet
Rebekah Rimsay, Chan Hon Goh, Rex Harrington and
Sonia Rodriguez in Spring from *"The Four Seasons"*

Photographer: Cylla von Tiedemann

Preserving Our Cultural Heritage

Heritage is how we preserve our past and protect our future. Heritage matters to Ontarians. It does not matter to the Eves government, as the last eight years have shown.

The current government cut \$2 million in funding to museum and heritage programs. We believe this funding is essential to support the important heritage efforts of local communities.



We will rewrite the Ontario *Heritage Act* to safeguard Ontario heritage properties for future generations.

There is no recognition of the public value of community museums, archival institutions or archeological sites in Ontario. In fact, it is nearly impossible to save heritage buildings or promote and preserve heritage streets in Ontario.

Our current heritage legislation is so weak that it cannot preserve the site of Ontario's original parliament. That means that a vital piece of this province's history can be paved over because our legislation as currently written does not enforce preservation powers.

A recent study by Robert Shipley, a University of Waterloo planning professor, found that 25% of Ontario's designated heritage buildings have been demolished under the current provincial *Heritage Act*.

The Ontario Liberals believe that the arts and culture matter to Ontario.

They matter because we can't have a strong economy, creative people and innovative industries without them.

They matter because the arts enrich our lives and contribute to our prosperity.

Choose a government that cares about the arts and culture, for a change. Choose Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals.



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www.choosechange.ca

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