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**THE POLITICS OF CULTURE IN OTTAWA:
THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF A MUNICIPAL CULTURAL POLICY
1939 - 1988**

By

ANN LORETTO BENINGER, B.A., B.Ed.

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
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Abstract

For half a century, from 1939 to 1988, Ottawa's local visual and performing arts community fought to win support for its activities from the City of Ottawa. National capital cultural institutions, funded by the federal government, received pride of place in funding, facilities, promotion and infrastructure support, and provided the capital city with "culture" at no cost to the municipality. In other cities, cultural interests pressed their municipal governments successfully for local theatres, music halls and civic art galleries. In Ottawa, there was less incentive to develop a local cultural infrastructure. A second arts industry in the capital, provided by the local sector, was considered redundant given the free, federal fare. This thesis describes and analyses the interaction and development over time of the key actors and events that led to municipal support for Ottawa's local arts sector, a process which culminated in 1988 with the establishment of a municipal cultural policy.

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ABBREVIATIONS LIST

AF of M	American Federation of Musicians
ANNPAC	Association of Non-Profit Artists' Centres
CAO	Council for the Arts in Ottawa
CAC	Cultural (Grants) Advisory Committee (for RMOC)
CARFAC	Canadian Artists Representation / Front des artistes canadiens
CARO	Canadian Artists Representation Ottawa
CCA	Canadian Conference of the Arts
CRO	Communauté régionale de l'Outaouais
CRT	Canadian Repertory Theatre
DDF	Dominion Drama Festival
DND	Department of National Defence
EMC	Encyclopaedia of Music in Canada, Second Edition
FCA	Federation of Canadian Artists
FCM	Federation of Canadian Municipalities
FDC	Federal District Commission
FPA	Festival of Performing Arts
GCTC	Great Canadian Theatre Company
GGFG	Governor General's Foot Guards
JCC	Jewish Community Centre
LTP	Lakeside Theatre Productions
MAG	Mayor's Advisory Group on Arts and Culture
MCC	Ministry of Citizenship and Culture (Ontario)
NAC	National Arts Centre
NACO	National Arts Centre Orchestra
NCAA	National Capital Arts Alliance
NCC	National Capital Commission
NCJWO	National Council of Jewish Women Ottawa
NFB	National Film Board
NGC	National Gallery of Canada
NRC	National Research Council
OAC	Ontario Arts Council
OACF	Ottawa Arts Centre Foundation
OACF	Ottawa Arts Court Foundation
OBE	Ottawa Board of Education (Public)
OCA	Ottawa City Archives
OCAC	Ottawa Carleton Arts Coalition
OCCC	Ottawa Carleton Cultural Council
OCC	Ottawa City Council
ODL	Ottawa Drama League
OFAC	Ottawa Folk Arts Council
OLT	Ottawa Little Theatre
OMAC	Ottawa Municipal Arts Centre
OMDC	Ottawa Municipal Drama Centre

OPO	Ottawa Philharmonic Orchestra
ORCSSB	Ottawa Roman Catholic Separate School Board
OSA	Ottawa School of Art
OTC	Ottawa Transit Commission
PAC	Public Archives of Canada
RA Centre	Recreation Association Centre, public service employees
RAF	Royal Air Force
RCM	Royal Conservatory of Music
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
RMOC	Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton
VACAC	Visual Arts Centre Advisory Committee
VAPAC	Visual Arts Policy Advisory Committee

INTRODUCTION

On 5 October 1988, after nearly half a century of public pressure to gain political support for the local cultural sector, Ottawa City Council “confirmed its continuing commitment to providing cultural services to the community through the adoption of a Corporate Cultural Policy (CCP) for the City of Ottawa.”¹ The policy was important not only because it addressed an area rarely considered by cities in policy terms, but also because it represented an unusual effort to carve a space for a local cultural sector, one that was set in an extraordinary national capital context.

Three conditions contributed to this October 1988 decision. They worked together to support the notion that Ottawa’s municipal government should support the local arts scene. First, Ottawa’s arts community had, in incremental stages over a half-century, established an active and complex sector that touched the lives of a large portion of the local populace. A notion evolved that a modern community looked to its government for more than just water, sewers, and roads, and that government could legitimately support the arts as a non-material societal good. The first condition or factor considered in this thesis, then, is the historical development of a political relationship between the city’s cultural community and its government.

The second condition was the growth within Ottawa of a skilled arts labour force. Before the Second World War, the ability to train and work as an artist in Canada was severely limited by a lack of infrastructure. Afterward, long-term support for the arts developed because municipal recreation, provincial education, and federal cultural programs encouraged the development of such infrastructure. Two events were of

¹ Don M. Gamble, Commissioner of Recreation and Culture, Department of Recreation, City of Ottawa, *A Cultural Policy for the City of Ottawa (1988)* p. i.

special significance in this regard. The creation of the Canada Council in 1957 as a funding agency for professional artistic development in Canada, and Centennial Year nationalism a decade later as a vehicle for amateur development, helped transform an evolving sector of cultural producers into a permanent feature in Canadian society. The art they produced and the publicity it engendered helped to create a large-scale demand for Canadian arts products. Ottawa in particular benefited and was in many ways poised to be an arts leader in Canada.

Despite the increased social acceptance of the idea that government should support the arts, and the increased size and complexity of the local Ottawa arts community, the third condition that informed the 1988 arts policy worked against these first two. In the national capital context, the local arts sector had to compete with the national cultural activities. Ottawa's position as a capital city meant national institutions provided cultural services at no cost to the municipality. A second arts industry in the capital -- by that of the resident arts sector -- was considered to be somewhat redundant. Thus, where in other cities, business and cultural interests pressed their municipal governments for local theatres, opera and music houses, and civic arts galleries, in Ottawa, there was less incentive to develop a civic arts infrastructure. As a result, professional, self-employed artists found it difficult to establish a local Ottawa arts market.

These factors -- the increasing legitimacy of the idea that government should support the arts, the increasing size and complexity of the arts sector, and the national capital context -- generated Ottawa's Corporate Cultural Policy (CCP) and gave shape to its agenda. What was the process that led to this policy -- one of Canada's first municipal

cultural policies – as an endpoint? Research studies focused on the politics of urban arts development in Canada are rare. This thesis will contribute to that literature and offer an historical chronology of the political, economic, social and philosophical factors that defined the politics of culture in Ottawa. The research draws on primary and secondary documents, as well as interviews with politicians, federal and municipal government and non-governmental authorities, arts business owners, arts administrators, and artists,² and focuses on the history of the relationship between Ottawa's local arts community and its municipal government within the capital city context.

From the beginning of the Second World War in 1939 to the passage of the Corporate Cultural Policy in 1988, Ottawa underwent seven distinct stages of political-cultural development. The first chapter (1939 – 1956) describes a thriving visual and performing arts amateur scene in Ottawa, which developed in large part because of the presence of the vice-regal court at Rideau Hall, resident arts volunteers, entrepreneurs and impresarios, religious and educational institutions, the military, and the initiatives of the municipal and provincial governments. Ottawa became the first city in Canada to include culture in its recreation program, and it also led the country in establishment of a visual arts centre, an arts council, and multi-purpose community (art) centres. Canada's first filmmaking company and Canada's first two professional theatre companies were established in the city during this time.

The second chapter (1957 – 1962) begins with the creation of the Canada Council and ends with Prime Minister John Diefenbaker's proposals for the Centennial Year Celebrations. This was a critical period of time in Ottawa's cultural evolution because it

² For a list of interviewees, see Appendix 1.

saw development of multi-jurisdictional relationships with the arts community, a search for arts facilities, an expansion and maturation of the arts sector, and exploration of the advantages and disadvantages of capital city life for artists. Ottawa's Festival of the Arts and the Ottawa Municipal Drama Centre developed to profile the city's talent.

From 1963 to 1967, the Ottawa cityscape and culturescape changed dramatically as it prepared for, and then celebrated, Centennial Year. The National Capital Arts Alliance formed to establish the National Arts Centre. Cities across the country used Centennial Commission capital, operating and project funds to profile their local artists; but in Ottawa, the municipality demolished two of the city's performing arts facilities. Two distinct cultural identities emerged in the city at this time, one local and one national, and the municipality began to move away from arts sector support even as popular interest in the local sector rose.

The fourth chapter (1968 – 1973) is marked by two milestones: the formal establishment of regional government through the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton (RMOC) on 1 January 1969 and the opening of the National Arts Centre (NAC) on 31 May 1969. With the latter, the national cultural agenda began to compete more actively with the local. These events added to the complexity of cultural relationships in the city and marked a trend whereby the local visual and performing arts community's recognition diminished in inverse proportion to the growth of the national.

The fifth chapter (1974 – 1978) describes a turning point in the city's political-cultural life. Beginning in 1974, the municipal and regional governments began funding the NAC through grants from local taxes. Ottawa became Canada's only city to award funds to a national institution, and did so at the expense of its local arts sector. In 1978, a

grassroots political-cultural alliance was formed to combat this practice. At the same time, several important transitions heralded a rising level of professional cultural activity in the city. The Visual Arts Ottawa Survey Exhibition No. 1 and the establishment of the Great Canadian Theatre Company (GCTC) were the result of increased political-cultural effort by the sector. These activities lent it greater public legitimacy. At the end of the period, the municipality announced it would establish its first long-term cultural plan.

A penultimate phase in the development of a cultural policy began with the regime of reform mayor, Marion Dewar (1979 – 1985). Dewar's terms of office allowed the municipal government to explore new political, economic, social and cultural initiatives. Dewar established the Mayor's Advisory Group on Culture in 1980, and its recommendations provided a template for events that occurred throughout the decade, including the policy of 1988. There was a growing pan-Canadian awareness of local culture as an engine of both social and economic benefit, seen through initiatives such as cultural tourism and festivals. The Visual Arts Policy of Ottawa was approved in 1985 by Ottawa City Council, and created one of Canada's first "1% for Art in Public Places" programs. During this period, both municipal and regional grants became available to local artists.

The final chapter (1986 – 1988), under the leadership of Mayor Jim Durrell, marks a growing politicization process, and includes events and activities such as the Mayor's Task Force on the School of Art, the negotiations for Arts Court, the *Arts Facilities in Ottawa Report*, and the RMO Report: *Towards a More Complete Culture*. When surveyed, one in four local artists considered moving to a new city.³ In a national

³ Robert Sibley, "Report blasts lack of aid for artists: One in four local artists considers move to new city" in *Ottawa Citizen*, 4 November 1988, found in *RMO Minutes*, 22 February 1989, p. 1330.

comparison of municipal cultural infrastructure, Ottawa, even with the federal institutions, ranked seventh across the country. Without the federal institutions, the ability of the city to profile its arts was “off the map”⁴ because Ottawa was missing what was normally the top regional level of professional arts infrastructure. It lacked funding, facilities, and promotion with which to profile the local sector, professional artists. Paradoxically, by 1987, Ottawa was known as a Festival City, and Ottawa’s Festival Assistance Policy won awards in the United States for its innovative strategies and funding criteria. Its distinction highlighted what was perceived as a growing sophistication of interrelationships and sector strength. But the reality was the city’s cultural foundation was built on an extreme reliance on volunteer labour, inadequate funding, and short term, temporary programming, designed to fit the needs of a city that had no civic cultural facilities. International perception did not match reality. The situation culminated with the City Council’s approval of the City of Ottawa’s 1988 Corporate Cultural Policy, a proclamation of civic commitment. It had no funds to back it up.

⁴ Mike Anderson, “The State of the Scene,” reprinted in Regional Council of Ottawa-Carleton (RMOC), *Minutes*, 22 February 1989, p. 1336.

Chapter One (1939 – 1956)

The Early Years: An Introduction

Prior to the Second World War, Ottawa was not a cultured city by international standards. Neither public nor private money had provided the infrastructure necessary to create and maintain a professional arts community and the city had no art gallery, orchestra, chorus, opera, dance or theatre of any calibre. Whereas other capitals built resplendent theatre houses, concert halls and exhibition halls in which to host their own or visiting artists, Ottawa's cultural venues were hockey arenas, school auditoriums and gymnasiums, outdoor pavilions, and a handful of old vaudeville and movie theatre houses. With these drawbacks, few professional artists could be enticed to live in the city and those who did live there performed minor roles in churches, schools and local entertainment venues. In a city with a population of roughly 130,000 in 1938, the vast majority of artistic effort was amateur.

The capital city politics that created this environment was characterized by acceptance of the existing order of things. Urban development was not primarily bottom-up as in other Canadian municipalities, i.e. economically and politically driven by private business interests, but was top-down, driven by the politics of the federal government. Within this inverted context, much of the planning in the capital region therefore bore a national rather than a local stamp.⁵ For Ottawa's literati, this meant the vice-regal cultural affairs of Rideau Hall set the standard for the city's arts activities. This association "set Ottawa apart, both from Montreal, so much more handsome and

⁵ Federal government interest in planning the "official" sections of Ottawa began with the Ottawa Improvement Commission (1899 – 1927), followed by the Federal District Commission (1927 – 1958), and then the National Capital Commission (1958 to present).

sophisticated a city, and from Toronto, so much wealthier”⁶ and the view became accepted that the city’s cultural affairs were taken care of because they were well patronized.

With the perception that culture was supported by the elites of Ottawa society, civic investments in culture were rare. Instead, municipal support for leisure time pursuits was limited to recreational athletic activities that reflected the interests of local economic and political power brokers. Beginning in 1873, civic patronage in Ottawa focused on “masculine” pastimes such as hockey and football clubs.⁷

Sports was perhaps the most lively activity, as a reflection of the interest of both the Upper Town business community and the vice-regal and civil service groups of the government corporation [...] it is particularly significant that the Rough Riders and the early hockey teams were among the rare beneficiaries of local government largesse [...] and that their chief supporter was the Upper Town fragment, which, in the twentieth century, dominated the city council.⁸

When, on rare occasion, the city did invest in culture, it did so with ill grace, as when in 1896 the Local Council of Women petitioned City Council to establish a public lending library. The motion was defeated but the Women’s Council persevered and, in 1906, American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie agreed to finance the construction of a civic library in Ottawa, on the condition that the municipality provide annual operating

⁶ Sandra Gwyn, *The Private Capital: Ambition and Love in the Age of Macdonald and Laurier* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1984), p. 232.

⁷ “Ottawa has a long history in the provision of recreational places and programs for its citizens. Involvement began in 1873 with volunteers raising funds for playground equipment. In 1911 Ottawa City Council adopted a motion by the Board of Control that a Playgrounds Committee be established, and in 1912 the Local Council of Women became the first citizens’ group to work in partnership with the city to create a playground at McNabb Park. On 2 February 1913 the Ottawa Playgrounds Association was formed and received \$1000.00 to create supervised playgrounds for Ottawa children. The Department was established in 1919 as the Ottawa Playgrounds Commission. In 1927 a Playgrounds Department was established with an advisory group called the Ottawa Playgrounds Committee (composed of appointed City Council members). At the end of the Second World War, Ottawa’s first indoor community centres opened in three schools. The Ottawa Recreation Commission was formed on 1 July 1946 to program for indoor recreation and the Playgrounds Department was responsible for outdoor activities. By 1949 a total of thirteen community centres had been established. They were reconstituted in 1952 as the Department of Public Recreation.” From the OCA, *Ottawa Civic Recreation Record*, Vol. I, No. 9, 1 September 1953.

⁸ John H. Taylor, *Ottawa: An Illustrated History* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Co., 1986), pp. 128–130.

costs. With a foreign investor underwriting the capital costs, the public library motion was approved, although it was deemed a “useless luxury” by city council.⁹ Civic support for cultural activities was repeatedly resisted.

In only one instance in the city’s early history did the municipal government, the federal government and Rideau Hall work together to create a cultural institution in Ottawa that catered to and was enjoyed by both the elite and the general public. That effort centred around the Ottawa Drama League (ODL), Canada’s first little theatre, begun in 1913 as part of the Little Theatre movement.¹⁰ The movement started in Europe in the 1880s and quickly spread to North America as a reaction to the imported, crass commercialism of burlesque and vaudeville.¹¹ In Ottawa, this reaction was augmented by the desire for more Canadian fare, and local residents’ interest in having their own dramatic expression.¹² In 1915 the federal government, impressed by the ODL’s efforts, offered it the exclusive and free use of the federal Victoria Memorial Museum auditorium (now the Museum of Nature on McLeod Street). The theatre volunteers designed a stage for the hall, made props, sketched out plays that would suit the site, and spent money advertising the new playhouse. But on 3 February 1916 the Parliament Buildings burned to the ground and the ODL lost its home because the Parliamentarians chose the museum’s auditorium as the alternate location for their sittings. The company was forced

⁹ Taylor, p. 140.

¹⁰ The Little Theatre Movement began in Europe in the 1880s. The Ottawa Drama League (ODL) formed on 9 May 1913, when “a number of men and women of the Capital gathered to discuss the formation of a drama league.” From Iris Winston, *Staging a Legend: A History of Ottawa Little Theatre* (Carp, Ontario: Creative Bound, 1997), p. 17.

¹¹ David Gardner, “Little Theatre and Amateur Theatre” in Eugene Benson and L.W. Conolly, eds., *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Theatre* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 303.

¹² Gardner, p. 301.

to move to the commercial Russell Theatre, where it stayed until 1922, returning to the museum in 1923.¹³

For the ODL, a proper theatre was needed, one independent of governmental exigencies. In cooperation with the Methodist and Presbyterian Church Union in 1925, it bought the Eastern Wesleyan Methodist Church on King Edward for \$60,000.00, raising the money through a private subscription drive. After much renovation, Ottawa's first amateur theatre opened on 3 January 1928. Shortly thereafter, the ODL became incorporated as a not-for-profit organization.

In 1929, ODL president Duncan Campbell Scott appealed to Ottawa City Council that the Ottawa Little Theatre building be spared municipal property tax, because it had been a church. The Council agreed, through By-Law 6658, which stated that it would

... exempt the Ottawa Drama League from all municipal taxes and rates other than school and collegiate institute, water and local improvement rates [...] and all such lands and buildings as may from time to time belong to the said Drama League, so long as they are actually used and occupied by it....¹⁴

After the library agreement of 1906, this was the city's second "subsidy" for culture.

In 1932, the ODL's relationship with Government House led to the founding of the Dominion Drama Festival,¹⁵ an annual, adjudicated competition of all the Little

¹³ Winston, p. 20.

¹⁴ OCA, Ottawa, *Minutes*, 4 June 1929, pp. 437 – 438.

¹⁵ On 29 October 1932 Lord Bessborough (Governor General 1931 - 1935) held the first organizational meeting of the *Dominion Drama Festival* (DDF) at Rideau Hall, with Sir Robert Borden (former Prime Minister), Col. H.C. Osborne (honorary director and vice-president of the *Ottawa Drama League*), Martha Allan (*Montreal Repertory Theatre*), Lady Margaret Tupper (*Winnipeg Little Theatre*), Rupert Harvey (British adjudicator) and Vincent Massey (DDF chairman), among others. The festival was launched in the *Ottawa Little Theatre* building in the week beginning on 23 April 1933 (Shakespeare's birthday), and Governor General Bessborough and Prime Minister Mackenzie King attended its inauguration. They created the bilingual (French and English) competition because of calls for the "creation of a centralized organization to co-ordinate the activities of the many Little Theatres in Canada. The decision was made to hold a national, annual, adjudicated competition, and winners from each regional division (Ottawa was in the Eastern Ontario Drama league) would compete against each other in a final competition. The Ottawa Little Theatre site held the first five competitions (1933- 1937). The sixth was in Winnipeg and then the war halted efforts until 1947." In Herbert Whittaker, "Dominion Drama Festival" in Eugene Benson and L.W. Conolly, eds., *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Theatre* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 144 – 145.

Theatre troupes from across Canada, under the patronage of Governor General Bessborough.¹⁶ For the first five years of the festival, from 1933 to 1937, the Ottawa Little Theatre (OLT) building hosted the event and welcomed actors from all across the country. In this role, the ODL established one of Canada's first theatre workshop series for new playwrights (est. 1936) and also began children's theatre workshops.¹⁷

Through its involvement with the federal government from 1915 and 1923, its relationship with City Hall and local corporations from 1925 to 1929, and its association with Rideau Hall in 1932, the ODL enjoyed an unusual combination of local initiative coupled with federal, municipal and vice-regal support, which allowed it to survive and thrive as one of Ottawa's few permanent amateur community arts ventures.

In the history of Ottawa prior to World War Two, municipal government patronage for culture existed only on rare occasions, such as the establishment of a library or as tax benefits to the Ottawa Drama League. Funded recreational activities of

¹⁶ The relationship of the Governors-General and their courts with the local arts community of Ottawa began in 1872 with the theatricals and musicals of Lord and Lady Dufferin (Governor General 1872 – 1878). In 1880 the Marquis of Lorne (Governor General 1878 – 1883) and his wife the Princess Louise (daughter of Queen Victoria) helped found the Canadian Academy of Art (at the former Clarendon Hotel on Sussex Street in Ottawa) on 6 March 1880. From this later developed the National Gallery of Canada. The Lorne's also supported the Fine Arts Association of Ottawa (1879 – 1880). One of its activities focused on education, and this eventually became known as the Ottawa School of Art, which still continues in 2004. Lady Aberdeen (1893 – 1898) became honorary president of the Morning Music Club, and Lady Minto (1898 – 1904) became a honorary member of the Ottawa Branch of the Women's Art Association of Canada. Both provided opportunities to young artists. Lord Grey (Governor General 1904 - 1911) established music and drama festivals with trophies made for them, and the Lord Grey Competitions for Music and Drama began in 1907. In 1927, for Canada's Diamond Jubilee Celebration, the Viscount Willingdon of Ratton (Governor General 1926 - 1931) oversaw Canada's first national radio broadcast, which featured music from the new Dominion Carillonier, the Chateau Laurier Orchestra, the Hart House String Quartet, the Bytown Troubadours, and a Centenary Choir comprised of hundreds of Ottawa region schoolchildren. National interest in cultural matters continued in 1929 when Lord Willingdon also established The Willingdon Arts Competition, which expanded the earlier Lord Grey Competitions for Music and Drama and added awards for painting and sculpture as well. In 1932, Lord Bessborough (Governor General 1931 - 1935) introduced Canada's first theatre competition, and established the Dominion Drama Festival. Lord Tweedsmuir of Elsfeld, Sir John Buchan (Governor General 1935 - 1940) founded the Governor General's Awards for Cultural Excellence, which became Canada's premier literary award.

¹⁷ Winston, p. 96.

the day focused on sports or other male-centred activities, and culture was the domain of the society's elite.

The Second World War and Ottawa Artists (1939 – 1945)

With the arrival of the Second World War, Ottawa's artistic sense and sensibility was transformed. The war brought new ideas and challenges to the foreground of Canadian society and culture suddenly assumed a greater role. In the wartime government marketplace of the capital city, artists in Ottawa had the best employment options in the country because both public institutions and private businesses offered work.

The federal government's war needs required professional writers, actors, musicians, composers, photographers, filmmakers and visual artists to work in "art for the government's sake" situations¹⁸ in military bands, the National Gallery of Art,¹⁹ the Canadian Government Exhibition Commission,²⁰ the Canadian Bank Note Company, the Queen's Printer, the Mint, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), the Bureau of Public Information,²¹ and the National Film Board (NFB). Artists came to Ottawa from across the country and in some cases, from Europe. They were needed to communicate ideas of loyalty, patriotism and nationalism through art and thus serve the needs of a

¹⁸ The exact number of artists employed in these situations is unknown.

¹⁹ The National Gallery of Art was established in 1880.

²⁰ This commission was established in 1901 to present Canada through exhibits at international trade fairs. In 1918 immigration was the main focus and pictures of the open spaces in Canada brought many to work here. In 1945, the exhibitions assisted in re-establishing and establishing trading patterns.

²¹ In 1942 this became the War Information Board, with a sub department of Cultural Affairs.

nation at war. The complementary interests of governments and the arts community became apparent, emboldening artists to make new claims on the state.

With the outbreak of war a new period in the history of cultural activity in Canada began [...] it soon led to a conviction that the country's cultural life had to be put on an altogether different footing than that on which it had stood for the previous forty years. Manifest most clearly in [this, was] the growing support for the idea that culture had a role in society....²²

Resident amateur arts organizations benefited greatly from the influx of professional artists, who became participants, audiences, and arts leaders. With these additions, artistic activities in the city grew and the sector prospered during the war. Allard de Ridder formed the Ottawa Philharmonic Orchestra (OPO) in 1944,²³ and amateur musicians from the government's Royal Air Force,²⁴ the National Film Board, the National Research Council, and the Civil Service Recreation Association, along with out-of-town and local professional players, joined the new orchestra. Other amateur groups that benefited from new talent included the Orpheus Society (est. 1906),²⁵ the University of Ottawa's *Schola Cantorum* (est. 1931),²⁶ the *L'Academie de-la-Salle* Symphony Orchestra (1934 – 1941), the Musical Arts Club (est. 1938), and the Ottawa Choral Union (est. 1939). For all these musical groups, concerts were held at churches,

²² Maria Tippett, *Making Culture: English-Canadian Institutions and the Arts before the Massey Commission*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), p. 156.

²³ In 1946 and in 1947, the Ottawa Philharmonic Orchestra received municipal grants of \$1,000.00 each year. Then they stopped. Municipal grants for any type of cultural activity did not begin again until 1958. From OCA, Ottawa, *By-Law 9625* (1946) and *By-Law 9794* (1947).

²⁴ "The members of Air Force band were allowed in the Union, unlike in the States. In the states, military positions were not allowed to be in union, and in Canada they were. That was a concession, because in Canada, aside from the military bands across Canada, there weren't many professional musicians, except in Toronto, Montreal and a few other places." From Jim Milne, (former conductor of the Governor General's Foot Guards Band), interview with author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario. 20 January 2004.

²⁵ Orpheus began in 1906 as the Orpheus Glee Club. In 1916 it became the Orpheus Amateur Operatic Society and often played at the commercial Russell Theatre (est. 1897 - 1928).

²⁶ Father Conrad Latour founded the *Schola Cantorum* in 1931. For further information about the choir, see Louis-Gérard Alberti and Alan H. Cowle, "Palestrina Choir/Choeur Palestrina" in EMC 1011a.

at the Ottawa Auditorium,²⁷ the Capitol or Imperial Theatres,²⁸ in school auditoriums, or the Chateau Laurier Hotel.²⁹ Would-be thespians learned their craft at the Little Theatre playhouse or with Sock n'Buskin (est. 1943) at the new Carleton College (now Carleton University).

Private business also offered work to artists, but there were some negative aspects to Ottawa's capital city status. The government was supposed to provide what the market did not and problems erupted when it created departments that competed with commercial enterprises already established in the city. Canada's first professional filmmaking company, Crawley Films of Ottawa (est. 1938), worked with the government, and its "bread and butter" was industrial films for government departments. When the NFB was established in 1939, Crawley Films had to compete. In many ways, the NFB had the advantage because it was government sponsored and its fixed costs bore no relation to market prices. In addition, it had an instant in-house production and national delivery system for its products, which were disseminated by governments across Canada.³⁰ Despite these difficulties, Crawley's led the field in Canadian themed documentary and social consciousness raising films, and

brought together in Ottawa a critical mass of talent, an incredible base of world-class cinematographers, animators, sound and lighting people. It hired actors who were often just starting out, like Lorne Greene, Geneviève Bujold, Fred Davis,

²⁷ The Ottawa Auditorium (1923 – 1967) was on the site of what is now the YM/YWCA at Catherine and O'Connor Streets. It was a 5,000-seat ice rink, and boards were laid down on the ice for the orchestra performances.

²⁸ The Imperial Theatre was built in 1914 on Bank Street, and is now Barrymore's, a performance club for music acts. The Capitol (or Loew's Theatre) was a resplendent, 2528-seat movie house built in 1919, and was on the site of what is now 240 Sparks, at Queen Street. After the opening of the National Arts Centre in 1969, the Capitol was demolished (in May 1970.) From Judy Barrie, "The Capitol rings down the curtain on 50 years of entertainment," *Ottawa Citizen*, 29 April 1970, p. 41.

²⁹ The Ottawa Union Train Station and the Chateau Laurier Hotel opened in 1912.

³⁰ In comparison to Crawley Films, the NFB followed the British film school model, from which John Grierson had come.

Rich Little and many others, and Crawley's became known as the Canadian model for filmmaking. Being Canadian was important.³¹

Commercial work for artists also came through entertainment contracts but even these caused some tensions between the federal and municipal governments and local artists, because the city's first cultural grant was provided not to a local organization but to a federal one. In 1944, the Ottawa Civil Service Recreation Association (est. 1940) received \$500.00, "to establish an outdoor stage for regular presentation throughout the summer of variety shows, free to residents of Ottawa and men and women of the Armed Forces."³²

During the War, employment was high for Ottawa artists. The cultural life of the city was lively with amateur and professional effort. Elsewhere, however, Canadian artists' lives were more difficult. Other Canadian centres struggled to build infrastructure for the development of civic arts. To investigate this situation, Canadian artist André Biéler organized Canada's first (visual) artists' conference in Kingston, Ontario on June 26 to June 29, 1941.³³ The American Carnegie Foundation funded it. Difficulties of travel and exhibition in Canada meant artists often worked in isolation and the conference was for many the first opportunity to meet fellow Canadian (and American) artists. The plight of artists in a society where mass production marginalized individual artistic work was a subject of discussion. The conference resulted in the creation of a national artists' association to promote artists' interests in the public sphere.

³¹ Bill Stevens (owner of Crawley Films), interview with author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 2 February 2004.

³² OCA, Ottawa, *By-Law 9420* (1944).

³³ Canadian Conference of the Arts, *Crossroads 2001: Arts and Cultural Policy in Canada – the Last Half Century and Beyond* (Ottawa: Canadian Conference of the Arts, 2001), p. 11.

At the conference's end, the Federation of Canadian Artists (FCA) formed to address these and other artists' concerns. The FCA had two primary goals.³⁴ First, artists wanted to change what they thought was an erroneous but widespread belief that the arts were elitist. This attitude had arisen because the original arts consumers were the wealthy, the aristocrats, and the churches. The artists, as producers, were tarred with the same brush although they, as a sector, were neither wealthy nor privileged in society.

Second, the FCA wanted better opportunities for artists to work in Canada. Canadian artists had difficulty in accessing their own country's markets. Three major reasons existed for this state of affairs. One, the provincial education systems did not address arts education and there were few Canadian opportunities for higher education in the field, which meant that those with talent had to study (and then work) abroad. Two, for those professional artists who returned to work in Canada, the country's small population and vast geography, plus its dearth of public facilities, made touring and exhibition nearly impossible. Hence the public was unaccustomed to Canadian arts products. Third, the U.S.'s superior market population and more temperate climate, combined with its formidable cultural entertainment distribution system, allowed American mass-produced entertainment objects to overwhelm the arts market not filled by Canadians. Work opportunities for Canadian artists were thus scarce.

For three years, the FCA investigated this state of affairs, and on 22 June 1944, presented its "Brief Concerning Cultural Aspects of Canadian Reconstruction" to the House of Commons' Special Committee on Reconstruction and Re-establishment (also known as the Turgeon Committee). The FCA made three major recommendations:

³⁴ Mary MacLachlan, "The Bonding of Artists; the Growth of Culture," *Proscenium*, Volume 1, No. 1, (Ottawa: Canadian Conference of the Arts, February / March 1992), pp. 27 – 33.

creation of a central federal cultural agency,³⁵ government action on issues of copyright, multiculturalism, and Canadian content, and the establishment of a network of decentralized community art centres.³⁶ Government action on the first two fronts was delayed for several years, but on the third, there was a response. Ottawa became the first Canadian city to establish community recreational (art) centres.

Ottawa was able to take this lead because the capital city's tax system changed. Until 1944, revenues were lower than normal for a city of Ottawa's size as it could not tax federal government land and buildings. But during the war, when the city was expected to cope on its own and provide housing and transportation for the wartime government workers (from 11,848 employees in 1939 to 34,740 in 1945)³⁷ as well as their families, a municipal deputation argued successfully for federal grants-in-lieu of full property taxes.³⁸ Increased federal grants relieved the municipal financial situation. Initially, there was no room in the budget for civic planning in activities such as culture, which had formerly been undertaken by private organizations and individuals. But with the tax system improvement in 1944, the city gained new resources and began in late 1945 to extend its services.

³⁵ This recommendation became the Canada Council.

³⁶ Tippet, pp. 167–168.

³⁷ Figures from Taylor, p. 212.

³⁸ For further information about Ottawa during the Second World War, see Jeff Keshen, "World War Two and the Making of Modern Ottawa" in Jeff Keshen and Nicole St-Onge, eds. *Ottawa: Making a Capital*. (Ottawa, University of Ottawa Press, 2001), pp. 383–410.

Post-War Ottawa (1946 – 1956)

The decade following the war was a transitional time for Ottawa artists because positions were being re-negotiated in the national political and traditional economic marketplaces. Due to Canadian wartime achievements, Canada's post-war international reputation rose. There was a sudden upsurge of federal interest in culture as a component of its national and international image. In 1946, Ottawa suddenly became home to dozens of new embassies from countries eager to do business with Canada. The need for a state-centred, Canadian cultural image to capitalize on these cosmopolitan connections meant a shift in the vision of the capital. Wartime artists remained employed in Ottawa with the government as it worked to construct a new post-war Canadian identity.

Simultaneously, the municipality began to build a local cultural infrastructure. Canadian soldiers who returned from the war, and immigrants who settled in the area, complemented the diplomats' urbanity and brought to the city new ideas about culture. The small but active local amateur arts sector, nurtured by its association with Government House and by the tutelage of professional artists who arrived during the war, added its talents to this developing arts industry. The cultural literati envisioned a future for Ottawa similar to that of the capitals of Europe and Asia, which boasted long-established theatres, concert houses and civic art galleries as essential elements of capital city living. In contrast to the nationalist uses of art by the federal government, they embraced an "art for art's sake" agenda in which art was valued not for moral, didactic or nationalist purposes, but for its own merits.³⁹ The municipal government was aware of

³⁹ The term "art for art's sake" (attributed to Walter Pater) from "*l'art pour l'art*" (attributed to Théophile Gautier) "was a slogan raised in defiance of those who [...] thought that the value of art was to serve some moral or didactic purpose. Art for art's sake affirmed that art was valuable *as* art, that artistic pursuits were their own justification, and that art did not need moral justification — and indeed, was allowed to be morally subversive." From: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Art_for_art's_sake. Accessed 30 December 2004. For further information about the term,

the change in attitude not only among its citizens but also by the federal government towards government sponsorship of the arts, and began to respond to these notions on the local level.

There was some opposition, especially from laissez-faire business interests who felt municipal government sponsorship should only be in aid of core services in transportation, water, sewage, and so on. But social reformers, envisioning a new municipal order, worked to establish the civic government as a cultural sponsor. The idea was novel in Canada but it was still accepted by city council because the municipality wanted to be a leader in the country in this regard. In a municipal publication of a few years later, this vision was phrased in terms of

providing space for new imposing structures to house departments, museums, theatres and convention halls [where the town design would] allay the aesthetic and the practical [...] from which will emerge a capital distinguishable by the union of art and nature...⁴⁰

How this was to be achieved posed difficulties. This was a new venture and the municipality was conservative, with only a small pocketbook. The city focussed on the practical, acknowledged that civic cultural sponsorship was unusual, and began small. In 1946, the city acquired three buildings, termed them community centres (an extension of the ideas of the FCA agenda), and established the Ottawa Recreation Association to administer cultural programming. The Association's programming sought to popularize and democratize on a broader scale those amateur activities already occurring in the city.

see Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, c1980). Originally published Walter Pater, *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, (London, 1873).

⁴⁰ Daniel Drolet, "When we began," *Ottawa Citizen*, 2 January 2005, p. 2, quoted from *The Centenary of Ottawa 1854 – 1954: The Capital Chosen by a Queen* (Ottawa: City of Ottawa, 1954), p. 76.

The city's budget provided grants of \$30,000.00 to the Association for both 1947 and 1948, with increases provided annually thereafter.⁴¹ Citizens reacted enthusiastically to this new municipal program, and Ottawa's first civic art sessions were held at Green Island during the summer of 1947. By 1949, thirteen centres operated, with programs such as dance classes in square dancing, ballet and tap at Overbrook, Manor Park, Sandy Hill, Lindenlea, Ottawa East, Ottawa South and Westboro community centres, music instrumental groups at Sandy Hill and Carleton Heights, and choral groups at Cambridge and Ottawa South.⁴²

The city also supported drama programs as extensions of already existing community initiatives. In 1936, the Ottawa Drama League (ODL) began Children's Theatre Workshops, which later became its Theatre for Children program.⁴³ In 1949, it was transferred to the Recreation Commission, and ODL actors and directors volunteered their efforts under this new management. They taught skills in mime, acting, make-up, costuming, directing and other aspects of stagecraft to interested teenagers and by 1951, Teen Talent Shows were established in three districts. The programs gained in popularity, and there were needs for more leaders and leadership training. The city was encouraged by the popularity and growth of the cultural programs, but it had minimal resources.

⁴¹ OCA, Ottawa, *By-Law* 9794 (1947) and *By-Law* 9967 (1948).

⁴² OCA, *Ottawa Civic Recreation Record*, Vol. 2, No. 5, 1 May 1953.

⁴³ In 1946, the Ottawa Drama League (ODL) established the Theatre for Children program. Volunteers Marion Taylor, Julie MacBrien Murphy and Amelia Hall (later director and actor with the Canadian Repertory Theatre and at Stratford) all worked on this. When the ODL renewed its regular programming and began to withdraw from its work with children, the Recreation Department took on the production chores. From J.M.C. Meiklejohn, "Theatre Education in Canada After World War II: A Memoir" in *Theatre Research in Canada*: Vol. 12 No. 2 (Fall 1991). http://www.lib.unb.ca/Texts/TRIC/bin/get.cgi?directory=vol12_2/&filename=Meiklejohn.htm. Accessed 1 November 2004.

The city appealed to larger political bodies, and in 1951 the provincial education ministry addressed the municipal cultural concerns.⁴⁴ Under provincial law, the Ontario Ministry of Education was responsible for community centres. It decided to recognize only one municipal recreation authority to be eligible for provincial grants in any one city. Consequently, on 1 January 1952, Ottawa merged the Ottawa Recreation Commission (indoor activities) with the Ottawa Playgrounds Department (outdoor activities). The merger created the Ottawa Department of Public Recreation (hereafter known as the Department).⁴⁵ It inherited ninety sites,

... which included 43 rinks; 35 recreation fields; 21 supervised playgrounds; 15 wading pools; 6 supervised natural beaches; 3 tennis courts; 3 bowling greens; 2 indoor and one outdoor swimming pools, and 2 recreation buildings for special activities.⁴⁶

Included in this listing were 16 community centres.⁴⁷ With the merger, these centres became multi-purpose to suit the needs of the broader recreation (athletic and social-cultural) vision. With the amalgamation, the advantage of a separate civic department for cultural development was lost

The city's nascent social and cultural programs became marginalized in the new Department. The original community centres of the Ottawa Recreation Association (1946 – 1951) had been but temporary steps towards establishing proper theatres, music centres and art galleries suited to the purpose of the separate artistic disciplines, but the timeframe for development (before the merger) was too limited. No permanent facilities

⁴⁴ OCA, *Ottawa Civic Recreation Record*, Vol. I, No. 6, 1 June 1953.

⁴⁵ OCA, Ottawa, *By-Law* 12-52 (1952).

⁴⁶ OCA, *Ottawa Civic Recreation Record*, Vol. I, No. I, 1 Jan. 1953.

⁴⁷ The recreation by-law allowed the city to "acquire by purchase or otherwise, real and personal property for that purpose. A community centre meant a community hall, athletic field, indoor / outdoor swimming pools, skating arena, and skating rinks." From OCA, Ottawa City Council, *By-Law*, No. 281-56, 5 November 1956, p. 589.

were developed. None of the ninety sites acquired under the merger had the requisite conditions for performing artists. At minimum, what was required were stage facilities with a hall for the audience, and backstage and stage space for production and performance. Space was also needed for construction and storage of props, wardrobes, dressing rooms, and administration offices. Visual artists, for their part, lacked the following critical resources: production and exhibition space, easels and art tables, adequate lighting, sinks, kilns, ventilation hoods, pottery wheels, and printing presses.

Nonetheless, the amalgamation was important because it created the first program in Canada with a mandate to provide the citizens of a municipality with “cultural, historical, physical and social activities and services, and educational activities [which do] not fall within the direction or supervision of any school program of recreation.”⁴⁸ Controller John Powers, Chairman of the Department of Public Recreation, recognized Ottawa’s leadership position and wrote:

While, more and more, recreation is being recognized as an integral part of everyone’s life, in very few places in Canada or the U.S. has a city accepted the importance of the field to the extent of setting up a full-fledged civic department to administrate its recreation program.⁴⁹

For cultural interests within the new Department, the appointment of Margaret Farr to the position of Assistant Commissioner and Director of Programming was both prescient and progressive.⁵⁰ Farr, a graduate of the Margaret Eaton School of Literature and Expression in Toronto (which had as its roots dramatic works fostered by the Irish Literary movement and the Little Theatre movement) faced a difficult task. She had to

⁴⁸ OCA, *Ottawa City Council, By-Law 12-52* (1952).

⁴⁹ OCA, *Ottawa Civic Recreation Record*, Vol. I, No. 1, 1 January 1953.

⁵⁰ OCA, *Ottawa Civic Recreation Record*, Vol. I, No. 9, 1 September 1953.

establish a full-fledged cultural recreational program within this new and broader based recreation mandate, and had to convince traditional recreationists, the athletics interest, to accept culture within their municipal infrastructure and budget. For municipal purposes, the two activities were defined as cultural recreation and athletic recreation. Both focused on amateur development.

Farr's tasks for cultural recreation were, first, to find leaders to organize cultural programs, and second, to acquire facilities in which to house activities. To accomplish this, she proposed three options that would allow the city to augment its limited culture budget and at the same time popularize and democratize its programs. Cultural activities would be offered by the community, the Department, or a combination of both.⁵¹ In this manner, Farr continued the tradition of joint community-municipality cultural efforts that had begun before the municipality became involved in 1946, and at the same time, she laid the foundation for future models of partnership. The creation of the Ottawa Municipal Arts Centre in 1953 was the Department's first test case.

The interest in community centres for cultural (and social) activities was, in addition to Ottawa's specific mandate to create a model post-war capital that was inclusive of culture, part of a general post-war trend for social reform within society and

⁵¹ In November 1954, these "systems" were adopted as community centres standards and aims, rather than rules and regulations. Margaret Farr suggested that the "community recreation program should be planned and operated by members of the community. A program of recreation that is planned by a state or civic authority and superimposed on the people of a community is incompatible with democratic ideals and with all accepted principles of the recreation movement and the recreation profession. A program planned for people by a central authority, in fact, defeats many of its own aims. Aside from some of the obvious values of a recreation program such as the constructive use of leisure time, the development of various skills, a good program should seek to develop in the members of a community, qualities of leadership and good citizenship. A program which is "laid on" by a civic department such as the water service is, cannot begin to achieve such objectives. Moreover, the program in any given community should be planned to meet the needs and interests of that particular community. It is the members of the community itself who are aware of the needs and interests of their community. The civic department plays a large part in community recreation by making it possible for people to operate community centres. This is done in many ways – mainly through the provision and maintenance of facilities, the assistance of a specialist staff and the provision of leadership training opportunities. Each (the community council and the department) has its unique function. It is important that these separate functions be understood by all concerned as otherwise one agency may usurp, unknowingly, the responsibilities of the other with unsatisfactory results." From OCA, *Ottawa Civic Recreation Record*, Vol. III, No. 1, 1 January 1954.

its leisure pursuits. The recreation model that had catered to generations of male-centred sports activities was no longer adequate to society's changing needs. The addition of a social-cultural reform agenda to these earlier traditions met with some opposition but nonetheless, the union of recreation with culture had begun. Societal perceptions about the value of art in society were changing in the process.⁵²

The idea of art "as an integral part of life, as part of general cultural accomplishment and personal fulfillment" had its roots in mid 19th century England and Germany, and the FCA community art centre proposal in 1944 was an extension of that influence.⁵³ In 1949, Arthur Lismer, a member of the Group of Seven and Educational Supervisor at the Art Gallery of Ontario, began to promote recreation movement art objectives for the province.

[Lismer] placed an emphasis on the importance of creative art education for children. Aside from organizing enormously popular children's art classes at the Gallery, he also established children's art classes for Toronto public schools. Technical training, so popular in the nineteenth century, was now exchanged for a response to the child's need to develop a total personality. [...] By 1937 the program of studies issued to public and separate schools stressed creativity, psychological connection with the child's experience, and a greater emphasis on crafts.⁵⁴

In addition to the Department's cultural recreation efforts, some entrepreneurial, leisure arts programs also started in the city after the war. These included the Ottawa Valley Art School (1949 – 1952) on Elgin Street, and Carleton University's first studio courses in painting and drawing in 1950. But these were not enough to meet the rising

⁵² For further information about the history of the Recreations and Parks Movements, see: <http://www.nrpa.org/content/default.aspx?documentId=513>. Accessed 5 July 2004.

⁵³ Shannon Ricketts, "The Ottawa School of Art: 1953 – 1987" (Ottawa: Ottawa School of Art, April 1987, photocopy), p. 3.

⁵⁴ C.D. Gaitskell, *Art Education in the Province of Ontario* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1948), p. 5, in Ricketts, p. 3.

demand. In 1951, local artists petitioned the city to establish a formal community art program and in 1952 the Department created the position of Fine Arts Advisor.⁵⁵ The Department now had two community centre choices:

In determining the most effective method of providing facilities to those in the community interested in painting, drawing and sculpture, there were two alternatives – either to introduce a fine arts program at each of the various centres or to centralize the art program. For various reasons, it was considered wiser to work in the direction of centralization and to establish an art centre where instruction would be provided and which would serve as a demonstration project and a training ground in relation to the scattered community centres.⁵⁶

Within the Department's new vision for social reform through recreation, the request for a community art centre was accommodated at minimal cost. The city's decision not to become directly involved in building, programming and directly administering a cultural facility (as the Department was doing and had long done for the athletic community) resulted in the procurement of an existing building and the "city provided an old, two-storey schoolhouse at Billings Bridge and paid for its maintenance and heating."⁵⁷

On 28 October 1953 the Ottawa Municipal Arts Centre (OMAC) opened.⁵⁸ Shortly thereafter, the health department denounced the building as a firetrap because "it was heated by two oil stoves that had extended pipes across the ceiling and up to the

⁵⁵ This position was filled by National Gallery of Canada employee, John K.B. Robertson. In 1953, Robertson left the National Gallery of Art and opened his own commercial "Robertson Galleries", where he exhibited both contemporary and traditional art, as well as Eskimo art (as it was known then). Arctic artists such as James Houston would come once a year to exhibit their works there. Robertson was also president of Ottawa Municipal Arts Centre (OMAC) 1953 - 1960. From Jim Burant, *History of Art and Artists of Ottawa and Surroundings, 1790 - 1970: Part III, 1946 - 1978*. (Ottawa: Ottawa Art Gallery, 1995), pp. 14 - 15.

⁵⁶ OCA, *Ottawa Civic Recreation Record*, Vol. III, No. 1, 1 January 1955.

⁵⁷ Ricketts, p. 3.

⁵⁸ OCA, *Ottawa Civic Recreation Record*, Vol. 1, No. 12, 1 December 1953.

second floor.” Nonetheless, people were excited about the opportunities that the new site would bring, and classes were filled, six days a week. For administration of OMAC,

a rather medieval system prevailed, whereby if a teacher attracted students enough to pay his salary, and something toward the upkeep of the building (guard service, heat and cleaning), he (she) was kept on -- otherwise dropped.⁵⁹

As the programs grew in popularity, more teachers were needed at other community centres and in April 1954 the Department sponsored an Arts Leadership Training Course.⁶⁰ By 1955 there were calls for a full time school of art in Ottawa, to provide courses for recreation workers, welfare workers and teachers, and plans were made for the arts centre to be integrated with the work of the Guild Studio of Liturgical Art,⁶¹ and to be supervised by Carleton University, in conjunction with the Department. But nothing came of those ideas.⁶² The centre’s enrolment continued to rise, which resulted in mounting costs for the city and concerns about the role of the art centre. In 1956 (perhaps fearing that the city was paying for an educational facility, which was the responsibility of the province) OMAC clarified its position by re-stating the two major policies that were established at the inception of the centre.

The standard of the program would be kept as high as possible by engaging only well qualified teachers; and that *the Centre was a community centre, not an art school*. Teaching people to paint would not be the major means we would use to help people find a fuller, more satisfying way of life [...] In short, this Centre would have, as its objectives, the objectives of the recreation movement, but its entire program would be art activities of various kinds.⁶³

⁵⁹ “Ottawa Municipal Art Centre: The Lost Facility.” Unknown author, unpublished document dated 16 April 1967. (Courtesy of Jeff Stellick, Executive Director, Ottawa School of Art)

⁶⁰ OCA, *Ottawa Civic Recreation Record*, Vol. II, No. 4, 1 April 1954.

⁶¹ Burant, III, p. 15. In 1953, the Guild Studio was established at 317 Queen Street, a combined effort of Dutch-born Theo Lubbers, Hungarian-born Victory Tolgyesy, and Canadian-born Gerald Trottier. The post-war population of Canada meant growth in cities and construction of many new buildings, including churches, and the Guild Studio artists were employed in stain glass design and other religious artwork.

⁶² Ricketts, p. 4.

⁶³ OCA, “Art Centre News” in *Ottawa Civic Recreation Record*, Vol. IV, No. 3, 15 March 1956.

One difficulty with the OMAC, beyond its limited facility problem, was to determine the type of service it would provide in relation to its sustainable funding. The OMAC was the only centre of its kind between Montreal and Kingston, and with increased programming due to popularity - "it is not inconceivable that within the next year we could have a thousand children in Saturday morning art classes throughout the city" - questions were raised about where the students would go given the limited number of facilities, and who should pay for the program.⁶⁴

Within the Department's priorities, the majority of the now multi-purpose community centre programs focused on short-term gains and numbers, and ran as low-cost playtime arts and crafts programs with unskilled workers. Contrary to this, the OMAC programs focused on long-term skill development (like music lessons) and used professional artists as instructors.⁶⁵ Hence, its programs cost more and the return on investment wasn't immediately evident. Because of the merger and the association of culture with recreation, the "parameters of artistic work were not clearly defined in the public mind."⁶⁶ A public relations dilemma was posed for the Department, and the status of artists was affected negatively. Fears increased that the cultural vision of the city would have to justify itself according to alternative agenda funding constraints and not artistic goals. With a view to countering this, the artists endeavoured to extend their network of cultural recreation supporters even more broadly.

⁶⁴ OCA, "Art Centre News" in *Ottawa Civic Recreation Record*, Vol. IV, No. 3, 15 March 1956.

⁶⁵ Ricketts, Appendix 2, p. 12. The OMAC 1956-1957 teachers were Mrs. Sturgeon (painting), Gerald Trotter (life drawing), Victor Tolgyesy (sculpture), Larry Halpin (painting), Fred Gardham (painting), James Boyd (graphic arts), and Pat Haldorsen (painting).

⁶⁶ Williams, Hilde Bollen et al, *The Artist in the Changing City* (London: British American Arts Association, 1993), p. 17.

The municipality's early efforts to develop a cultural arts program had resulted in new partnerships and the creation of Ottawa's first civic arts facility. To further the municipality-community partnership program, in May of 1955, the art advisor to the department (John Gilmore), the chairman of the OMAC (John Robertson) and the Assistant Commissioner (Margaret Farr) met with interested members of the public, to "survey the possibility of establishing an Arts and Letters Council in Ottawa." By July the council was organized and its first efforts focused on exploring what Canada's other two municipal arts councils (Vancouver and Calgary) were doing. From a survey of their efforts, as well as that of eighteen U.S. arts councils, Farr wrote:

Interest in the arts is no longer considered precious and effeminate. The past quarter century has seen an increasing interest [...] and to give a broad overall coordination and integration to the work of separate art groups and the community, an arts council is necessary. [...] The benefits provide prestige to each group and help it to build morale, especially for struggling beginner arts organizations. [...] Big enterprises, when they think of moving to a new city, look at the cultural activities it offers just as they look at labour conditions, transportation and schools. Support of an arts council is not just idealism. It is an investment in a more attractive and prosperous community.⁶⁷

One goal of the arts council was to stimulate consumer interest in order to enhance the market for arts products, while simultaneously keeping recreational level participants moving forward to the professional level. An additional objective was to improve communications between the municipality and those citizens interested in civic cultural activity.

While public relations efforts continued, recreational drama programs kept up their search for adequate facilities that would allow them to rehearse and perform for long runs. This was difficult because multi-purpose community centres had other clients and

⁶⁷ OCA, *Ottawa Civic Recreation Record*, Vol. III, No. 8, 15 August 1955.

were needed for other activities. To compensate, the theatre community rented out space at market rates, and practiced in basements of church halls and in school gyms. There was annoyance about this, because the athletic recreation programs had civic buildings for those purposes and sports groups paid subsidized rates. But the demand for civic arts facilities was higher than the supply. The only option was rental of private space. In this peripatetic existence, amateur theatre troupes often built sets in one place, rehearsed in another, performed in a third, stored costumes and props in a fourth, and administered the programs from a fifth location. Because of the difficulties in the itinerant civic theatre program, support increased from other theatre community groups, such as the Ottawa Drama League, the University of Ottawa and Carleton University, the Canadian Repertory Theatre, and the National Film Board.

Despite these real estate problems, one of Ottawa's most notable civic theatrical successes of the early years was the creation of the Ottawa Saturday Players, Ottawa's first teenage troupe. It formed in 1952 and won the Bessborough Trophy for best play in the Dominion Drama Festival in 1953.⁶⁸ Following upon that success, the Department hired the Players' director Marian Taylor and she organized an intensive summer training program to train more youth and adult drama leaders, who in turn worked to establish long term drama programs in other city centres.⁶⁹

The more advanced members of the Ottawa Saturday Players formed the Ottawa Community Players, and the Sandy Hill Community Centre offered them a base of operations from 1953 to 1954. During that winter, the Players made a mobile theatre

⁶⁸ OCA, *Ottawa Civic Recreation Record*, Vol. III, No. 12, 15 December 1955.

⁶⁹ OCA, *Ottawa Civic Recreation Record*, Vol. I, No. 6, 1 June 1953.

from which playground summer shows could be presented, and these met with good reception and attendance.⁷⁰ The fall of 1954 brought one-act city drama festival shows to the University of Ottawa, with Canadian Repertory Theatre's Charles Jarrott as adjudicator.⁷¹

In 1955, Taylor had to leave Ottawa when the National Film Board relocated to Montreal,⁷² and Joe O'Brien of the aspiring-to-be-professional Ottawa Community Players was hired in her stead.⁷³ O'Brien said:

It was in the late 1950s, and as the new drama advisor for the city, all the activity was very much at the amateur, community level. At that time, as part of the recreation department, you wouldn't dare say that you were hooked up with any professional company or that you had professional aspirations – you weren't even allowed to think that way.⁷⁴

For the city's theatre program, ever since the 1952 merger of the Recreation Association (social-cultural activities) with the Playgrounds Department (athletic activities), cultural interests had a limited prospect in the Department. Capital expenditures for civic arts facilities were not on the agenda. O'Brien recognized this situation but knew the theatre program required a home base if it was to survive. During 1955, O'Brien searched for a suitable facility and found a 125-year old farmhouse that was available at a reasonable price. In February 1956, the Ottawa Municipal Drama

⁷⁰ OCA, *Ottawa Civic Recreation Record*, Vol. III, No. 8, 15 August 1955.

⁷¹ OCA, *Ottawa Civic Recreation Record*, Vol. III, No. 1, 1 January 1955.

⁷² Responding to innuendoes of a Communist connection, the Ottawa-based National Film Board (NFB) was forced to relocate to Montreal and with that departure, Ottawa lost a major source of professional artistry and mentorship in the city. For further information about the roles of film and filmmaking in Canada, see: <http://213.93.195.19/newlook/canada.cfm>. Accessed 1 May 2004.

⁷³ OCA, *Ottawa Civic Recreation Record*, Vol. IV, No. 1, 15 January 1956.

⁷⁴ Joe O'Brien, interview with author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 23 August 2004.

Centre (OMDC) for English theatre opened in the Reid Family farmhouse,⁷⁵ and the French theatre community was established at the Ottawa East Community Centre.⁷⁶ The OMDC was to be a joint community–Department effort, administered by the city.

The Ottawa Municipal Drama Centre will serve as the municipality's training ground for community centre drama instructors; provide training in drama for all interested persons; offer assistance or advice to drama groups throughout the City; and foster and promote an adult drama group (Ottawa Community Players) to represent the Department at drama festivals and provide inspiration to drama groups in community centres and on playgroups.⁷⁷

The culture program of the Department now had two facilities. From the merger of 1952, the majority athletic interests remained uninterested in culture, and provided minimal support in facilities and funds. As a result, programming was largely initiated by outside community groups, such as that by the not-for-profit Ottawa Drama League. The OMDC was a step forward.

While cultural activity was developing in the civic and amateur community spheres, Ottawa was simultaneously developing its own arts industry in the marketplace. The pre-war market for artists existed largely through employment in religious, education or state institutions, with audiences limited accordingly. Private patrons also commissioned artists and the wealthy enjoyed the fruit of artists' labours. Post-war, with increased leisure and general prosperity available to ordinary citizens, artists sought to make their living by creating art that catered to all, did not serve another purpose beyond its own artistic merit, and which could survive under market conditions. Unfortunately, in Ottawa, no infrastructure existed for entrepreneurial cultural work. The stories of the

⁷⁵ OCA, *Ottawa Civic Recreation Record*, Vol. IV, No. 4, 15 April 1956.

⁷⁶ OCA, *Ottawa Civic Recreation Record*, "Drama", Vol. IV, No. 1, January 15, 1956.

⁷⁷ OCA, *Ottawa Civic Recreation and Parks Record*, Vol. VI, No. 1, 15 January 1958.

Stage Society (1948 – 1949) and the Canadian Repertory Theatre (1949 – 1956) provide examples of the difficulties incurred trying to create and sustain an infrastructure for culture in the local Ottawa market.

Following the war, the Dominion Drama Festival (DDF) resumed its activities and returned to the Ottawa Little Theatre, where the first post-war competition finals were held from April 26 to May 1, 1948. Two of Ottawa's theatre companies, Le Caveau,⁷⁸ and the ODL, won prizes in the competition. At this event, English theatre enthusiast Hugh Parker spoke to many of the competitors in the hope of establishing a professional theatre company, and on 21 September 1948, the Stage Society premiered its first show at La Salle Academy. Ottawa *Citizen* Fine Arts news reporter Lauretta Thistle spoke with Parker and according to him, the birth was difficult:

I was very nearly beaten before I started for lack of a house to play in. Then when we did find this theatre we took over a bare stage. We had not so much as a pin, not a cup – nothing. The theatre was unknown and moderately out-of-the-way.⁷⁹

La Salle Academy, which was a Catholic boys' school, established in 1899 in Lowertown at the corner of Guigues and Sussex Streets, required a lot of work to make it ready for use as a public theatre. The professional crew⁸⁰ (many of them drawn from the amateur ranks of the Ottawa Drama League) did everything from building and painting the sets to sewing the costumes, selling the tickets and performing. As the plays changed every

⁷⁸ "In the early 1930s Le Caveau came into existence, instigated by Father Gaudreault, a Dominican monk interested in creating an artistic corporation modelled upon the Middle Ages, when music, theatre, painting and literature were closely allied. The Ottawa artist, Henri Masson, was involved with this organization." From Eva Major-Marothy, "Towards a History of the Ottawa School of Art: 1879 – 1949," (Ottawa: Ottawa School of Art, n.d., photocopy), p. 19.

⁷⁹ Lauretta Thistle, Ottawa *Citizen* article, 22 September 1948.

⁸⁰ By "professional" I mean that actors were able to come to daytime rehearsals and that their main source of income was from the theatre; in comparison to the ODL, the acting at the ODL may have been excellent but the actors were amateur because they did not get paid nor did they work fulltime at the theatre.

week, it was a madhouse for the actors and a delight to the audiences who, for the first time in the city's history, finally had a professional, full season, resident theatre company of its own. This was Canada's first professional, post-war theatre company.

Unfortunately, Parker's success at innovative ideas was not matched by his business acumen. Despite substantial financial investment in the company by Harry S. Southam, owner of the *Ottawa Citizen* newspaper, and businessman Charles Southgate, the company failed in its second season. However, on the day before it closed its books, another rose from its ashes,⁸¹ because Southgate and Southam backed a second attempt at creating a professional theatre company in Ottawa.⁸² Part of the businessmen's assurance in this new venture resulted from knowledge that Ottawa's actors were well regarded internationally. During the summer of 1949, in the interim period between closure of the Stage Company and the opening of the Canadian Repertory Company, some members of the Ottawa Drama League were invited to perform in Scotland at the Edinburgh Drama Festival. The cast (including Amelia Hall, who later worked with the Canadian Repertory Theatre and the Stratford Festival) presented Canadian author Robertson Davies' "Eros at Breakfast." The actors received international acclaim.⁸³

In September 1949 the Canadian Repertory Theatre (CRT) began and for seven years presented weekly or bi-weekly shows to Ottawa audiences. The CRT's aim was: "... to be in a position to support and encourage Canadian playwrights, artists, directors and theatre people to continue their chosen profession...."⁸⁴ The company's professional

⁸¹ Amelia Hall, *Life Before Stratford: The Memoirs of Amelia Hall* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1989), p. 91.

⁸² Hall, p. 93.

⁸³ Winston, p. 97

⁸⁴ Hall, p. 211.

actors included men and women who would later become international theatrical stars, such as Christopher Plummer,⁸⁵ Betty Leighton, Amelia Hall, William Shatner, William Hutt, Eric House, and others. For these pioneers, the work was a vocation and not a job; and many, like Amelia Hall who had been a teacher at the Ottawa Technical High School, gave up steady employment to follow the dream of working full time and creating professional theatre in Canada.

The company rented the 700-seat La Salle Academy because it was the only stage in town that was available for the long runs required at a price the company could afford. For the first few years the box office did well because the cast presented a new play every week or every second week and the audiences flocked to this new entertainment venue. But in 1952, television came to Canada and people started to stay home rather than go out for an evening's entertainment. Some of the cast left to become television actors. In 1953, the draw of superior working conditions (and the leadership of Tyrone Guthrie) at the new Stratford Festival robbed the Ottawa cast of many more of its leading thespians, and from that point onwards the company struggled.

Beginning in 1954 and for the next two and a half years, many citizen-based measures of aid tried to keep the CRT in the city. Under the authority of Southgate (President of the CRT's Board of Directors), the Theatre Club formed and tried to raise funds to pay down the debt. Southgate wrote to the Ottawa city council inquiring about tax rebates, tax relief in combination with city loans, or a property tax exemption, such as

⁸⁵ Christopher Plummer arrived in Ottawa from Montreal when he was 19 years old, to work in the second season of the Stage Society. When it closed, he continued with the Canadian Repertory Theatre.

that given to the Ottawa Little Theatre in 1929. But these arguments failed and Southgate later wrote:

Had the city found it possible to exempt the CRT from taxation or to make contributions to it that would have at least equalled the tax bill, the total sum paid in taxes would have been available to meet costs and would be approximately equal the amount owed to local businesses.⁸⁶

Other appeals were made for outright business loans from banks, backed by the city, which would enable the CRT to purchase the Glebe or Imperial Theatres. Both of these theatres were more centrally located and had the advantage of being secular sites. With the city as possible guarantor, the CRT offered to pay off the principal and interest over a long term. The guarantee would, in reality, cost the city nothing.

The municipal response was unexpected because it did not address any of the CRT's concerns but rather sidelined its proposal. On New Year's Day 1955, Mayor Charlotte Whitton offered the CRT the City's coat-of-arms and the right to display it. She inscribed it "to the Canadian Repertory Theatre, attesting their faith in the people of Ottawa."⁸⁷ She also offered to "advocate a contribution of \$20,000.00 derived from seizure of receipts from the sale of lottery tickets, to a fund for the arts, if any group of citizens would act as trustees."⁸⁸ No volunteers offered and the idea was dropped, as were subscription and funding drives from the community. In November and December of 1955, Mayor Whitton offered to build a joint government-city concert hall or festival

⁸⁶ Public Archives of Canada (hereafter PAC), Theatre Foundation of Ottawa, R9756 1, File: Canadian Repertory Theatre / Theatre Trust Fund (1 of 6), ca. 1955 – 1957.

⁸⁷ PAC, Theatre Foundation of Ottawa Papers, R9756 3, File: Canadian Repertory Theatre / Theatre Trust Fund (1 of 6) ca. 1955 – 1957, Sub-File: A National Centre for the Performing Arts: A Study Prepared for the National Capital Arts Alliance, October 1963.

⁸⁸ PAC, Theatre Foundation of Ottawa Papers, R9756 3, Sub-File: Memorandum to Mr. Lyn G. Jamison for the Ottawa Board of Trade Concerning the CRT, from Ronald Grantham, member of the Advisory Committee to the CRT, 7 December 1955.

hall at Lansdowne Park. This was nonsense because the CRT had requested help to buy or rent an already existing theatre in the city.⁸⁹ Despair settled on the group. The city's confusing responses and the CRT's difficulties were even discussed in Parliament on 7 March 1956 by the Hon. George A. Drew, who made many telling comparisons between what Ottawa lacked and what other national capitals had. But it was all to no avail, and the company "continued its hectic pace until the end of March 1956, when it had accumulated a deficit [...] and ceased operations."⁹⁰

The CRT died in large part because it was under-capitalized. The development of professional theatre in Canada was in its earliest stages, and the provision of venture capital (in the form of municipal assistance) was an idea too far ahead of its time for Ottawa's conservative-minded council. In addition, the theatre site was inadequate as it was an auditorium in a Jesuit school that was built in 1899. Production was difficult: flats for the stage had to be prepared in a low-ceilinged basement that often flooded, backstage accommodations were limited, and actors had to costume and do makeup in classrooms. Religious intolerance was also an issue: Orange Parades were still performed annually in Ottawa, and the Catholicism of the site kept some patrons away. The venue limited the repertoire: plays had to be approved by a Catholic priest, and when it introduced the character of a divorced woman on stage, only the intervention of Southgate with the bishop saved the CRT from being turned out.⁹¹ Transportation was also an issue, because the theatre was far from Centretown and serviced by only one

⁸⁹ *Ottawa Citizen*, 30 November 1955, p. 1, and 2 December 1955, p. 1.

⁹⁰ James Noonan, "Canadian Repertory Theatre", in Eugene Benson and L. W. Conolly, eds., *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Theatre* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 76.

⁹¹ Hall, p. 180.

streetcar. From the box office to the bathrooms, the facility was simply inadequate to a professional theatre life.⁹² Nevertheless, the CRT completed seven successful seasons of professional theatre between September 1949 and March 1956, which was a record in Canada at that time.

In the same month as the closure of the CRT, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) investigated infrastructure for culture on a grander scale.⁹³ In March 1956, the FCM called for additional Canadian government support for the arts. The recommendation was based on an international FCM ranking profile that surveyed several countries' cultural arts programs. It concluded that:

Canada has fewer concert halls, art galleries, parks, playgrounds and beaches than other countries of comparable development. The FCM suggests that every community of 50,000 persons should have a concert hall, art gallery, theatre, art school, ballet school, music conservatory, museum and library.⁹⁴

In this study, Canada and its capital city rated poorly. In 1956, the country had only one institution for the entire national population of about 17 million. The National Gallery of Canada had been promised its own building a half-century earlier but was still waiting, forced to share space with the dinosaurs and dolomite at the Victoria Memorial National Museum. Most of the Gallery's art works were stored in warehouses and unavailable for public viewing. The capital city, with a population of approximately 250,000 people in 1956,⁹⁵ could boast of only three public cultural facilities: the city library, the Ottawa Municipal Arts Centre (OMAC) and the Ottawa Municipal Drama Centre (OMDC).⁹⁶

⁹² PAC, Theatre Foundation Papers, R9756 1, File: Canadian Repertory Theatre / Theatre Trust Fund ca. 1955 – 1957, #6 of 6.

⁹³ The Federation of Canadian Municipalities is an umbrella organization that supports Canadian municipal governments.

⁹⁴ OCA, *Civic Recreation Record 1956*, Vol. IV, No. 3, 15 March 1956.

⁹⁵ Figures from Taylor, p. 210. In 1951 the population was 202,045; in 1961 it was 268,206.

Despite Ottawa's initial post-war vision of a "cultured" capital, major drawbacks in the form of contrary political will (in the Department) and the traditional marketplace hindered this dream. In November 1956, infrastructure conditions for municipal arts worsened in the city. For reasons of economy and efficiency, parks were now added to the recreation jurisdiction and the Ottawa Department of Recreation and Parks replaced the Department of Public Recreation. With the change, Farr was promoted to the position of Deputy Director of the Department, but her task to create and maintain an amateur recreation program in culture was rendered more difficult because culture, in the new mandate, was demoted to last place and diminished in status: "the said program shall be deemed to include physical and social activities and services, *arts and crafts*."⁹⁷

With the merger, Recreation and Parks acquired two hundred and four recreation sites. Two hundred and two of these were used for civic-sponsored athletic recreation programs. Many of the sites had sports facilities on the land (such as hockey rinks or swimming pools) and this civic provision created and nurtured a "child to adult" life cycle of opportunities for full skills development.

For cultural recreation, however, an equivalent municipally sponsored continuum did not exist. The OMAC and the OMDC were the only dedicated civic spaces offered for cultural skill development in a municipal setting.⁹⁸ Even with the overwhelming

⁹⁶ As the demand for cultural activities increased in the city the supply steadily decreased: the number of facilities that had been available was diminishing because land was being taken up by housing, and school gymnasiums and auditoriums formerly used as performance halls were being turned into classrooms, to house the rising numbers of students.

⁹⁷ OCA, Ottawa City Council, *By-Law*, No. 281-56, 5 November 1956.

⁹⁸ With the merger, the Department now had "46 skating and hockey rinks; 46 baseball and softball diamonds; 24 supervised playgrounds; 21 undeveloped sites; 13 wading pools; 12 recreation fields; 7 supervised natural beaches; 3 picnic grounds; 3 bowling greens; 2 rugby football fields; 2 soccer fields; 2 tennis courts; 2 indoor swimming pools (Champagne and Plant) and one outdoor pool (the largest of its kind on the continent); as well as 18 community

difference in budgets and facilities (202 athletic recreation sites to 2 cultural recreation sites), Farr still had to defend the arts program within the Department, and show that the cultural requests came from the community.

Recreation is a personal matter and while it is a legitimate function of government, it is not a service that can or should be laid on like a public utility. [...] The community recreation program is the responsibility of the members of the community, with assistance in leadership and facilities provided by the municipal recreation authority.⁹⁹

Given these inequalities, the cultural recreationalists of the Department expanded their network of community-municipality partnerships, in order to augment the meager municipal resources.

Conclusion

Before the Second World War (1939 – 1945), the space that was reserved for cultural activity within the city of Ottawa lay in the homes of the wealthy, the aristocratic court of Rideau Hall, the halls of education, and religious institutions. Cultural patronage on the national level was limited to the National Gallery of Canada, which resided in a natural science museum building. No sustained provincial or municipal patronage for culture existed.

During the war, with the arrival of hundreds of professional artists from across the country and from Europe to work for the war effort, Ottawa artistic life was transformed and a new order for urban living emerged. The resident amateur arts sector improved under the expert tutelage available, and gained performance and exhibition experience

centres. There were two community centres for special activities." In OCA, *Ottawa Civic Recreation Record*, "Maintenance Division Report", Vol. III, No. 2, 1 February 1955.

⁹⁹ OCA, *Civic Recreation Record 1961*, Vol. IX, No. 10, 15 October 1961, pp. 64-65.

while meeting increased demand for wartime entertainment. On the national level, professional artists worked in “art for the government’s sake” positions.

Following the war, Ottawa’s new international status meant diplomatic missions descended upon the capital city, intent on international trade with Canada. They, and the foreign workers who had arrived during the 1940s, came from largely European traditions where the canon of culture for ordinary citizens included operas, symphonies, ballets, theatre, and art shows performed and exhibited in halls built for those purposes. With the rise of post-war diplomatic status for Canada, a change in the demographics of the city, and an increase in prosperity and leisure time, there developed an increased demand for cultural activity. Significantly, both the federal and municipal governments addressed the matter seriously.

The city took the lead in the country and in 1946 introduced new programs in recreation that included artistic culture, a first in Canadian municipal budget planning. The federal government, with a weightier bureaucratic system, began to put cultural infrastructure in place a few years later and commissioned a survey of the state of the arts in Canada, through the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences 1949 – 1951 (also known as the Massey Commission).¹⁰⁰ The Commission investigated “broadcasting, federal cultural institutions, government relations with voluntary cultural associations, and federal university scholarships.”¹⁰¹ Voluntary

¹⁰⁰ The fledgling efforts of Ottawa artists to create and develop a cultural sector were supported by the efforts of the Governors-General, who provided leadership and inspiration to artists at a time when governments did not. Governor General Vincent Massey was no exception. He was well prepared for the role of arts patron by his activities prior to taking office. From 1949 to 1951, Massey presided over the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, which surveyed and analyzed Canada’s intellectual and creative life. In 1952 he was appointed as the first Canadian-born Governor General (1952 – 1959). The Massey Report influenced the founding of the National Library in 1952 and the Canada Council in 1957.

¹⁰¹ Paul Litt, *The Muses, the Masses and the Massey Commission* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), p. 3.

cultural associations existed because few commercial ventures could be sustained in the Canadian market. As the Canadian Arts Council¹⁰² revealed to the Massey Commission in April 1950, the opportunity to make a living as a professional artist in the country was nearly impossible.

No novelist, poet, short story writer, historian, biographer, or other writer of non-technical books can make even a modestly comfortable living by selling his work in Canada. No composer of music can live at all on what Canada pays him for his compositions. Apart from radio drama, no playwright, and only a few actors and producers, can live by working in the theatre in Canada. Few painters and sculptors, outside the fields of commercial art and teaching, can live by sale of their work in Canada.¹⁰³

The Stage Society and the CRT countered the national arts market trend and established Canada's first professional theatre troupes "doing a weekly winter season of stock..."¹⁰⁴ For patriotic and economic reasons, the theatre companies made Ottawa their home. There were hopes of a reciprocal relationship whereby the capital and the companies would bring enhanced prestige to each other. When corporate support was coupled with municipal, provincial and federal government support, as was the case with the Stratford Festival, the combination of incentives worked to everyone's benefit. When it was not, companies failed (as was the case with the Stage Society and the CRT) and the community lost individuals central to the artistic enterprise. Their efforts failed but they were nonetheless successful because they laid the foundation for future Ottawa performing arts industry development.

¹⁰² In 1941, the Federation of Canadian Artists was formed and in December 1945 it was renamed The Canadian Arts Council. In 1957 when the Canada Council was established, the Canadian Arts Council renamed itself and became the Canadian Conference of the Arts in 1958.

¹⁰³ Canadian Arts Council Brief, p. 1, in *The Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, 1949 – 1951* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1951), p. 182.

¹⁰⁴ Noonan, "Canadian Repertory Theatre", p. 76.

The early post-war vision of a decade earlier - that the capital city should be acquiring cultural attributes to mark its place as an equal among other cosmopolitan nations – was at odds with the reality of municipal bureaucracy and commercial interests. The task ahead was to create a dual stream infrastructure in the capital city context: one for municipally sponsored cultural programs, and one for commercial arts industry development.

Chapter Two (1957 – 1962)

Following the Second World War, the capital city of Ottawa underwent a major transformation in its acceptance of culture as part of the new social order. Indications that Ottawa would provide a leadership model for the rest of the country and introduce the “how” of cultural integration into municipal programs were founded on post-war euphoria, where “... nationalistic feelings [were] spurred by a sense of independence, accomplishment and international status [which] made the country eager to embrace the trappings of nationhood that were associated with other more mature nations.”¹⁰⁵ In the capital city, this resulted in the creation of the Ottawa Recreation Association, which played a major role in introducing broad-based cultural activity to city residents. Commercially, leadership in the development of an arts industry within the city in the “art for art’s sake” model led to the creation of Canada’s first two professional, repertory theatre troupes.

A decade later, however, the hopes in Ottawa for cultural integration had turned to despair. In 1956, the placement of the civic cultural program within a larger department led to the marginalization of culture within the city’s priorities. In the same year, market conditions saw the commercial efforts flounder and the artists departed for better working conditions. Nonetheless, something of a foundation remained.

In 1957, the federal government created the Canada Council,¹⁰⁶ an organization dedicated to funding professional arts activity. Five years later (1962), the federal government announced its first plans for the Centennial Year celebrations. In the half-

¹⁰⁵ Litt, p. 248.

¹⁰⁶ The Canada Council, established 28 March 1957 by an Act of Parliament, was a federal institution dedicated to funding professional literary, visual and performing arts production and performance.

decade interim, Ottawa's arts industry made inroads with audiences and political supporters. The arts community formed partnerships with federal institutions, the municipal government, the business community, and community volunteers, in order to achieve artistic goals and establish infrastructure for both amateur and professional development.

One of the first accomplishments in the expansion of the municipal amateur arts program was the creation of the Ottawa Lakeside Garden Festival of the Arts. For Deputy Director Farr, the best way to improve community feeling and strengthen public relations was to hold a local arts festival to profile the best of Ottawa's talent and offer opportunities for professional artistic development. The first festival was held in the summer of 1958.

Arts festivals had a long history in Ottawa and first appeared in 1903, under the leadership of Charles A.E. Harriss.¹⁰⁷ In 1932 the Dominion Drama Festival was founded in Ottawa. In later years, Governor General Vincent Massey sought to establish a Canadian Festival of the Arts in Ottawa in 1952, but the idea floundered because the city had no suitable accommodation.¹⁰⁸ In 1953 Ottawa Little Theatre photographer Malek Karsh suggested the Tulip Festival. Massey's idea was resurrected in the summer of 1955 at the new Kingsmere Festival of the Arts, held in the old Booth residence in Gatineau Park. This festival, similar in concept to that of the Banff School of Fine Arts,

¹⁰⁷ The idea of festivals as a means to highlight artistic excellence was first explored in Ottawa by Charles A.E. Harriss, who was active as a composer and conductor and in 1903, organized the Cycle of Music Festivals, in which the Chicago Symphony Orchestra was invited to Ottawa to perform with the Ottawa Choral Society. From *Encyclopaedia of Music in Canada* (hereafter EMC), 2nd ed., s.v. "Cycle of Music Festivals of the Dominion of Canada," p. 337a.

¹⁰⁸ The process and pursuit for cultural facilities in Ottawa was well known to Massey. From 1942 to 1948 Massey was Chairman of the National Gallery of Canada Board; in 1952 the Gallery announced a competition for plans for a new gallery, in 1954 the competition was halted, and in 1960 it was housed in the Lorne Building, a corporate office tower. For further information about the history of the National Gallery of Canada, see: http://national.gallery.ca/english/default_59.htm. Accessed 4 July 2004.

featured a full program of visual art, dance, music and theatre instruction, taught by national and international professionals, such as the OMAC teachers Gerald Trotter and John Robertson, who worked with members of the Group of Seven, including A.Y. Jackson and Henri Masson.¹⁰⁹

The idea for the Lakeside Festival was born out of a disaster. On 4 July 1955, Lakeside Gardens Dance Hall in Britannia Park was destroyed by fire. The Dance Hall had provided a half-century of dance, theatre and musical entertainment to Ottawa citizens and was a well-known Ottawa landmark.¹¹⁰ In 1950 it came under the jurisdiction of the Ottawa Playgrounds Department and upon amalgamation of civic recreation services in 1952, under control of the Department of Public Recreation. Recreation and Parks assumed possession in 1956. The Westboro Kiwanis Club had full charge of all operations at Lakeside Gardens and was responsible for the programming and supervision of dances.¹¹¹ After the fiery destruction of the building, nostalgia was high and there was an immediate request to rebuild. Lakeside Gardens opened again in June 1958. To celebrate, the Festival of the Arts was created and met with instant success.

The 1958 Festival at Britannia Park was important not only because it showcased local talent in all artistic disciplines but also because it attracted thousands of tourists and local visitors and clearly demonstrated that cultural activity was a popular pastime. The organization of the activities of the Lakeside Pavilion represented Farr's third type of relationship, whereby the site's activities were based on partnership with community

¹⁰⁹ The Kingsmere Festival of the Arts also organized a Theatre School and a Ballet School, with internationally renowned artists as teachers. *Ottawa Citizen*, 10 November 1954.

¹¹⁰ The Lakeside Gardens Dance Hall was constructed in the 1890s as a vaudeville theatre on Holland Avenue. In 1900, it was moved to Britannia Park and served both as a movie house and as a site for romantic dancing under the stars, especially during the Big Band era.

¹¹¹ OCA, *Ottawa Civic Recreation Record*, Vol. III, No. 8, 15 August 1955.

councils and specialized groups, with the Department providing some planning in equipment, supplies and leadership.¹¹² Its popularity justified the expenses of cultural recreation in other areas.¹¹³

In its eight-week run during the summer of 1958, the Festival's events were exceptionally varied. The agenda included: Canadian Award Films presented free to the public (from Crawley Films and the NFB, among others); children's puppet shows by the Ottawa Community Puppeteers; art work by the OMAC students; dancing and music listening, with selections by the Ottawa Pops Orchestra (a pick-up orchestra of local musicians); the Ottawa Teachers College Chamber Music Ensemble; and the Governor General's Foot Guards Band. Mayor George H. Nelms instituted a recital program and introduced the best and the brightest musicians to the Ottawa public. Pianist Cynthia Millman, violinist Gail Halliday and vocalist Joan MacDonald were featured in the first year.¹¹⁴ Jazz concerts by the Modern Music Club Jazz Quartet attracted crowds in the thousands and all the concerts were presented free to the public, through a grant from the Recording Industries and obtained by the Ottawa Federation of Musicians.¹¹⁵ The *Ottawa Citizen* newspaper, the *CBC Ottawa* radio station and other media outlets gave

¹¹² Deputy Director Farr had proposed three options that would allow the city to further popularize and democratize the process: cultural activities would be programs by the community, the Department, or a combination of both. From OCA, *Ottawa Civic Recreation Record*, Vol. IV, No. 11, 15 November 1956.

¹¹³ Once Lakeside Gardens opened in June 1958, Saturday morning drama classes began, with French classes at the Ottawa East Community Centre. From OCA, *Civic Recreation and Parks Record Ottawa*, Vol. VII, No. 5, 15 May 1959.

¹¹⁴ Cynthia Millman Floyd later studied in Vienna and then returned as a professor with the newly formed University of Ottawa Music Department, in 1969.

¹¹⁵ The local musicians' union was very active in Ottawa. On March 1 and 2, 1957, the Department of Recreation and Parks treated 900 boys and girls from 3 community centres to concerts by the OPO, conducted by Eugene Kash. The concerts were funded by a grant from the Trust Fund of the Recording Industries and the Local 180 of the American Federation of Musicians (AF of M), of which the OPO was a member. From OCA, *Civic Recreation Record Ottawa*, Vol. V, No. 4, 15 April 1957.

advertising and critical coverage.¹¹⁶ At the conclusion of the first Festival, John Climer, Department Art Specialist, wrote:

Ottawa has a great deal to offer in the way of artistic talent. Many of our younger generation leave every year to study in the larger centres of this continent and Europe. It is our hope that a wider appreciation of their potentialities may be achieved through a program that will remain largely for this purpose. It would seem that at last the City of Ottawa under the direction of this Department is following the current trend towards summer festivals. We look forward to next summer's program when the best in our local artistic achievements will be presented under the festival banner of Britannia.¹¹⁷

With the addition of the Lakeside Gardens Pavilion, the Recreation Department now had three sites for cultural recreation, in comparison to its two hundred-plus athletic recreation sites.

One of the key organizers of the Festival was the Ottawa Municipal Arts Centre (OMAC). Artists always produce more enthusiastically when there is an audience, and with the lack of a public gallery space in the city, the Festival offered a prime exhibition venue; presentation there brought critical acclaim to the city's visual arts program. In September 1958, in recognition of its popular support and community value, especially as evidenced through the Festival, City Council approved the OMAC's new constitution and status. Its objectives were:

... to assist the Corporation of the City of Ottawa, through the Department of Recreation and Parks, to provide a program of recreational activities related to fine arts for the inhabitants of the City of Ottawa and its environs; to provide instruction leading to the development and training of leaders in the fields of drawing, painting, sculpture and graphic arts; to arrange exhibitions of the arts, to include instructors, students, public exhibits and others; and to assist in the development of art programs of groups requesting same.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ OCA, *Civic Recreation and Parks Record Ottawa*, Vol. VII, No. 7, 15 July 1959.

¹¹⁷ OCA, *Civic Recreation and Parks Record Ottawa*, Vol. VI, No. 9, 15 September 1958. Speaker is John Climer.

¹¹⁸ Ricketts, pp. 5 – 6.

While the city wanted more control over how the centre was run, it realized the inherent administrative differences between a hockey arena or baseball field and a community centre for art that was programmed “based on public demand and the availability of appropriate professional instructors.”¹¹⁹ John Climer, the Department’s Director of Fine Arts Programs stated:

Although the Centre is legally constituted as a part of the Department, it functions almost entirely through the efforts of the [volunteer] Management Committee, with the Department assisting by providing the building, caretaker services, equipment of a permanent nature and advice when called upon to do so.¹²⁰

The availability of professional instructors was always a limiting factor in the OMAC’s expansion plans. Presentation at the festival resulted in an increased demand for OMAC courses, but limited staff hindered enrolment possibilities. To compensate, in early 1959, the OMAC compiled and distributed a concise handbook of art instruction, which outlined a 12-week course in clay modelling, a 12-week program for teenage art groups, and a 24 art lesson plan program for children, which could be undertaken at other community centres. The OMAC also established a lending library of texts on the subject of art. The OMAC, the Ottawa East Community Centre, St. Luke’s, Lindenlea, and the Chamberlain Avenue Assembly Hall all offered classes. The adult programs featured full season courses in graphics, sculpture, techniques, drawing, painting in oil, painting in watercolour and an experimental class for advanced students. There was also a weekly OMAC film series, which introduced the works of other international artists. A self-taught Municipal Ceramics Club worked independently at the centre, using its kilns.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Ricketts, p. 6.

¹²⁰ Ottawa School of Art Archives, *OMAC Annual Report*, 1959, in Ricketts, p. 6.

¹²¹ OCA, *Civic Recreation and Parks Record Ottawa*, Vol. VII, No. 12, 15 December 1959, p. 7.

The city's theatre program also benefited from exposure at the Festival. The Ottawa Municipal Drama Centre (OMDC) was now in full use, seven days a week, with juvenile classes held at the OMDC's Elmdale Park site, at Lakeside Gardens in Britannia Park, and at several other community centres.¹²² To meet the increased demand for its courses, and to encourage a higher standard of drama leadership, the Department prepared a theatre textbook, which provided step-by-step instructions for the teaching of dramatic skills. The text also contained edited versions of both classic and original plays for production, and other plays were available in the newly established drama library at the OMDC.¹²³ A special Theatre for Children was organized on Saturdays at Lakeside Gardens, and enquiries were made from several Ottawa Valley towns for a tour of these shows. The Junior Drama Festival was held for two days in April 1959 because of a large number of both French and English entries. The Eastern Ontario Drama League held a conference on creative drama for children in June 1959, and several local drama leaders attended.¹²⁴

The second Lakeside Festival of the Arts in July and August of 1959 was even more adventurous in programming than the first. It featured 40 different performances with 357 local and visiting artists, including the presentation of 8 foreign films chosen by various embassies, which covered the arts of mime and ballet through the technical arts of movie making to American symphonic orchestras.¹²⁵ There were also four plays (three English and one French), including an original one by Carleton's Sock n'Buskin theatre

¹²² Ibid., p. 5.

¹²³ Ibid., p. 6.

¹²⁴ Ibid., pp. 4 – 6.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 50

troupe. The Festival premiered works by Ottawa painters and sculptors and gave courses on jazz through the Modern Music Club.¹²⁶ The Lakeside Pavilion site hosted 48 square dances, 38 technical rehearsals, 32 dramas, 32 concerts, 25 training courses, 16 films, 9 drama workshops, and 8 exhibits totalling 208 activities, all sponsored by the Department.¹²⁷

It is worthy of note that in all cases of Fine Art Programming, with the exception of the Festival of the Arts that the general cost to the Department was in facilities and administration only. All costs involving materials, instruction, orchestras etc., were budgeted for and paid by the groups involved.¹²⁸

In every case, the materials and the instructors were paid for by the participants involved.

The Department supplied the land and the facility.

In the Department's cultural recreation program, the summer Festival of 1960 witnessed its most extravagant season. For the first time, the Department hired a Festival site director (earlier management and administration efforts had been by volunteers). This decision provided more organizational stability for the 600 artists and their 7000 patrons during the eight-week 1960 Festival. That summer, performers included the Ottawa Classical Ballet Company,¹²⁹ the Orpheus Society,¹³⁰ the Ottawa Tudor

¹²⁶ A Modern Music Club was formed in 1959 as a new unit of the Department. The group, under the leadership of Mark Warren, offered lectures to teenagers on jazz and other modern music, and was responsible for the selection of a four concert series at the 1959 Lakeside Gardens Festival of the Arts. For the full program, see *Civic Recreation and Parks Record Ottawa*, Vol. VII, No. 7, 15 July 1959.

¹²⁷ OCA, *Civic Recreation and Parks Record Ottawa*, Vol. VII, No. 12, 15 December 1959, p. 5.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹²⁹ The Ottawa Classical Ballet Company was Ottawa's first professional dance ensemble, and was founded by Ottawa-born Nesta Toumine, who returned to the city in 1958 after years of work abroad as a director-choreographer and dancer with the Ballet de Paris and the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo.

¹³⁰ The Orpheus Society was founded in 1906 and in its history was supported completely by its audience base and by local patronage. It offered musical theatre productions.

Singers,¹³¹ and the Festival Drama Company (which was a summer amalgamation of actors from the Ottawa Drama League, the Pocket Theatre and Devots de la Rampe). A new Lakeside Festival Orchestra formed. Mayor Nelms continued his featured presentations of Ottawa's musical talent. For the profiled musicians of earlier Festivals, this opportunity had led to performance contracts elsewhere, and receipt of some Canada Council scholarships. Film nights at the Festival were also highly popular, and fourteen embassies presented foreign films.¹³² The Ottawa Camera Club and the Ottawa Coloured Photography Association exhibited works. Visual and literary art shows were given by the OMAC, the Ottawa Authors Association, the Canadian Publishers Association, the Ottawa Valley Weavers, the Ottawa Valley Mineral Associations, as well as exhibitions designed by the Ontario Society of Artists, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and the Art Gallery of Toronto. In the press accounts and in the Department's own reports, there was growing excitement in the achievements of the Festival and in the public response. Climer voiced the Department's important role in this popularization process and its hopes for the future:

It is the assumption of this department that such programming of artists can be aided by supplying good administration and facilities. Making available artistic productions and recitals by young artists to a growing public should do much to create an awareness of their work and the high degree of training being received. [...] We look forward to the day when through the help of Ottawa's art educators we may be able to form a festival orchestra, a festival drama company, a festival schools of the arts, all dedicated to raising the standards of art appreciation

¹³¹ The original Tudor Singers (*not* the Montreal group that started in 1962) was founded in 1953 by Ottawa singer and conductor Robert Van Dine. "I had just come back to Ottawa from studying in New York and I brought back copies of madrigals that were very difficult to get at that time. In those days, everyone sang in church choirs. So I found some friends, and we started singing this music a capella, because everyone could read. We finally got larger repertoire, and we sang often in concert at Christ Church Cathedral. We were a mixed choir, men and women, and had costumes made. We were invited to sing in Stratford just before they started the Festival. We also did concerts for Eugene Kash (conductor of the OPO 1950 – 1957). It was Kash who introduced children's concerts in the city and we sometimes sang for those." From Robert Van Dine, interview with author, tape recording. Ottawa, Ontario, 20 February 2004.

¹³² OCA, *Civic Recreation and Parks Record*, Vol. VIII, No. 12, 31 December 1960.

through participation, and which will assure an audience of a high standard of programming.¹³³

The department also worked with the Ottawa Children's Film and Theatre Club (est. 1960)¹³⁴ a group interested in providing high value children's film fare, for presentation at Lakeside and at community centres across Ottawa. The Club screened and showed films, created a standard for evaluation, and was a co-operative venture. The Department assumed production responsibilities while the Club's Committee looked after ticket sales and publicity, and both worked together to create a quality production for Ottawa audiences.¹³⁵

In the summer of 1961, the Festival's importance grew beyond its original programming mandate of local arts presentation, and its activities spilled beyond Britannia Park. Always on the lookout for marketing opportunities, many non-governmental arts organizations regarded the Festival as a prime site for introduction to and distribution of Canadian arts products, and the adjudicated photography exhibition included submissions from Ontario and Quebec, the Canadian Publishers Association presented new authors and their works, and the Canada Music Centre promoted Canadian music and introduced Canadian composers. Teachers from the Ontario College of Art in Toronto, in association with the OMAC, came to the city and offered a special four-week, intensive Art Program for Adults. The City Hall foyer provided Festival exhibition space for works of art from the Art Institute of Ontario.¹³⁶ Perhaps best of all, during the three

¹³³ OCA, *Civic Recreation and Parks Record Ottawa*, Vol. VIII, No. 6, 15 June 1960. Writer is John Climer.

¹³⁴ It is unknown when the Club ceased.

¹³⁵ OCA, *Civic Recreation and Parks Record Ottawa*, Vol. IX, No. 3, 15 March 1961, p. 19.

¹³⁶ OCA, *Civic Recreation and Parks Record Ottawa*, Vol. IX, No. 12, 31 December 1961, pp. 85-86.

previous summers, the Ottawa public had been introduced to, and had acquired a taste for, Canadian and foreign films, offered through the efforts of Crawley Films, the NFB, and the local embassies. By 1961, the films were so popular that entrepreneurs turned the presentations into a profit venture. The Department no longer offered it at the Festival as it had no interest in competing in the market place. But the small municipal investment and the opportunity for exposure during the earlier Festivals helped launch this initiative and make it a success story.¹³⁷

The Lakeside Festival remained an artist and audience success through the summer of '62. The Musicians' Union offered three free concerts through the Performance Trust Fund,¹³⁸ and the bilingual tradition of the Festival offered two English and two French plays, as well as several skits and readings of adaptations of plays from French to English and *vice versa*. The popular Ontario School of Art offered summer classes at the OMAC, and from that, the Festival's strongest feature turned out to be the "seven week exhibition of works by Ottawa professional artists selected on the basis of participation in recent national or international shows, awards won and general acclaim in the world of arts."¹³⁹ The world was beginning to take note of Ottawa's artists.

But even as the cultural section and the resident arts community were working hard to establish a consumer base and a credible arts product in the city and had even achieved international recognition for their joint activity, by mid-summer concerns were

¹³⁷ OCA, *Civic Recreation and Parks Record Ottawa*, Vol. IX, No. 12, 31 December 1961, pp. 85-86.

¹³⁸ The Trust Funds were established after the Second World War by the American Federation of Musicians (AF of M) to support live music, and the name came from an agreement the Union had with the recording industries, whereby a certain portion of profits from selling recordings was put into music trust funds because mechanical music was hurting live musicians. So every union in North America was given money to spend on local concerts. That money benefited everything from dance bands, Dixieland bands, and everyone who belonged to the union could apply for it. From Milne, interview.

¹³⁹ OCA, *Civic Recreation and Parks Record Ottawa*, Vol. X, No. 7, 15 July 1962, p. 48.

being raised in the local press about the legitimacy of culture being funded at all by the municipality. The *Ottawa Journal* newspaper discussed public judgment criteria, and said: “for reasons which are not easily understood, many people select some of the public activities and label them “recreation”, and classify other in various ways such as “cultural” or “educational”.¹⁴⁰ Deputy Director Farr was concerned about this polarization. In response to the *Journal*, Farr reiterated the City of Ottawa By-Law 281-56, which read in part “...the said program shall be deemed to include physical and social activities and services, arts and crafts” and suggested:

... the Summer Festival of the Arts is sponsored by the Department of Recreation and Parks, in accordance with the departmental objectives of providing varied and balanced local opportunity for the people of Ottawa. It is therefore mandatory that we provide activities for the minority interests as well. Our annual Summer Festival of the Arts is one of these. It is a fact of life, that in our present state of civilization, the arts will never attract the thousands of fans, as do sports. But so long as the arts attract a sufficient number of participants and spectators to support a program such as the Festival, then it is a valid function of the Department to give leadership in this area.¹⁴¹

Farr also expressed concern that “the success of a program was usually judged by the number of participants but it was rare to hear a discussion of its quality and worth.”¹⁴² Nonetheless, the recurring municipal sponsorship of the Festival was positive commentary on the Festival’s worth as a valued element of Ottawa life.

Provincial educational initiatives also fostered the expansion and maturation of the arts sector in Ottawa, and the formation of partnerships between the schools and artists was vitally important to the sector’s expansion and development. New schools were built in Ottawa with dual purpose gymnasium and auditorium halls that opened to

¹⁴⁰ OCA, *Civic Recreation and Parks Record Ottawa*, Vol. X, No. 7, 15 July 1962, p. 45.

¹⁴¹ OCA, *Civic Recreation and Parks Record Ottawa*, Vol. X, No. 7, 15 July 1962, p. 48.

¹⁴² OCA, *Civic Recreation and Parks Record Ottawa*, Vol. X, No. 3, 15 March 1962, p. 16.

the street for the public. School life merged with street life, and concerts, dances, plays, and arts shows introduced local artists to young and old alike, in facilities such as the Elgin Street Public School (built in 1899, remodelled in 1957).

In association with capital spending, arts education programming budgets increased. In the 1950s, according to Ottawa Board of Education (OBE) music teacher Barbara Clark, “in almost every school were choirs in the junior years, and bands in the senior. [...] The school programs were well funded, and with hundreds of students in the bands and choirs.”¹⁴³ In 1958, a new choir was formed, and Clark became conductor of the Central Children's Choir of Ottawa (hereafter the Central Choir).¹⁴⁴

The grade six choir had begun for a school board workshop and the event was so successful, and the children enjoyed themselves so much, that they asked to stay together. In those days the Board had a music department of people who would go around to each school and work with the teachers and students. In larger schools you had a primary, junior and an intermediate school choir, and in every class there were musical children and teachers willing to learn.¹⁴⁵

Conductor Clark demanded the Central choir maintain high standards because it represented Ottawa, and in some ways, Canada.

We performed for the raising of the new Canadian Flag on Parliament Hill. We've also sung on Canada Day, on Remembrance Day, for Parliament, for the Governor General, and at the museums. We were invited to embassies and they would have people come and teach us their languages. We didn't receive outside

¹⁴³ In 1958, Ontario Music Educators' Association asked John Sutherland, Director of Music with the Ottawa Public School Board, to demonstrate how choral excellence could be achieved by using junior students from Ottawa schools. Following their demonstration, most of the seventy students asked to stay together for the rest of the school year. With Barbara Clark as conductor, in 1959 the Ottawa Central Children's Choir traveled to Atlantic City to sing for the American Music Educators Association conference. That trip was paid for completely by the Ottawa Public Board of Education. In 1960 the Ottawa Technical High School Band travelled to England and placed favourably against British school bands.

¹⁴⁴ For further information about the Central Children's Choir of Ottawa, see: <http://www.ottawachildrengochoir.ca/history.html>. Accessed 7 July 2004.

¹⁴⁵ Barbara Clark (Conductor, Ottawa Regional Youth Choir, former conductor, Central Children's Choir of Ottawa), interview with author, tape recording, 26 January 2004.

funding because we were with the school board, but we could perform in the schools for free.¹⁴⁶

On one level, the provision of skilled musical training to children through the Central Choir was simply an extension of the holistic focus of education at that time. But on another, the Central Choir served national capital objectives and the ensemble performed an important public relations service for both the city and the capital, one for which it was not paid.

The University of Ottawa also played a leading role in arts promotion, although not through its academic programs but rather through its community services.¹⁴⁷ One of its most famous ensembles was the Palestrina Choir, founded in 1931, and conducted by Father Jules Martel. From 1948 to 1958 “the Palestrina Choir sang over 50 times on CBC Radio and TV, gave over 40 public performances in Ottawa and on tour, which made polyphonic music better known and introduced many new Canadian works.”¹⁴⁸ It provided a public service, and introduced the city and the country to the sounds of music from the Renaissance period and to that of contemporary Canadian composers.

On one occasion, arts opportunity extended to an international competition, because diplomatic missions in Ottawa also provided venues for art, through embassy exchanges. In April 1957, the Japanese Embassy approached the cultural section of the Recreation and Parks Department, and requested submission of paintings by children of

¹⁴⁶ Clark, interview.

¹⁴⁷ The same was true for the outreach programs of the local CBC office, which often featured Ottawa musicians and actors on live, on-air programs.

¹⁴⁸ At the University of Ottawa, community choral singing had been encouraged and practiced continuously from at least 1931, when Father Conrad Latour founded the University’s *Schola Cantorum*. In 1939, Fr. Jules Martel became conductor, and later formed a new chorus for the Marian Congress held at Lansdowne Park. The Chorale de Congrès marial (1946 – 1948) became the Palestrina Choir in 1948, which was formed for the university’s centenary celebrations, held at the Capitol Theatre. From Alberti, EMC 1011a.

Ottawa, for the International Children's Drawing Exhibition to be held in Tokyo on 12 May 1958, sponsored by UNESCO. One hundred and seventy-five children from the Ottawa Municipal Art Centre (OMAC) submitted works, and the Department chose 45 paintings to send to Japan. The Tokyo Exhibition was held, and four Ottawa children (Frances Smith, 3 years; Janet Likeness, 9 years; Jocelyn Sinclair, 6 years; and Ullrich Schade, 9 years) placed in the competition. On the last day of May in 1958, Mayor Nelms and the Japanese Ambassador in Ottawa met the young competitors and awarded prizes to them at a special reception hosted at the embassy. The exhibition also featured "a group of 20 paintings by the children of Japan. These pictures were exchanged through the Japanese Embassy and the Department in return for paintings by children of the centre."¹⁴⁹

While municipal festival initiatives, school programs, and diplomatic goodwill exchanges were important to the evolution of the sector in the city, high distinction and merit belonged to individuals who devised highly personal schemes to make artistic opportunities happen in Ottawa. One of these was the non-competitive Ottawa Junior Music Club, founded in 1928 by Dorothy Jenkins McCurry.¹⁵⁰ According to Joan Milliken, a former Music Club performer,

Students could audition on any instrument, and concerts were held on Saturday afternoons at the old museum on McLeod, and for the best students, at the end of the year there were also evening concerts at Glebe Collegiate, beginning in the 1940s until the 1960s.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ OCA, *Civic Recreation and Parks Record Ottawa*, Vol. VI, No. 6, 15 June 1958.

¹⁵⁰ Dorothy Jenkins McCurry's father was W.F. Jenkins, who founded the Schubert Club and the Ottawa Amateur Orchestral Society in 1894. Her mother was Annie Jenkins Lampman, who studied in Leipzig and became known as Canada's first internationally renowned woman pianist. Her uncle was Archibald Lampman, a Canadian poet. Her husband was Harry Orr McCurry, Assistant Director of the National Gallery of Canada (1919-1939) and Director (1939-1955).

¹⁵¹ "I remember that Adrienne Poy (now Governor General Adrienne Clarkson) played, as well as Barbara Anne Scott and John Turner. The club was for kids up to the age of 18. At the end of the year they picked the best students and

As the city began to spread out in the late 1950s, other performance clubs began in other areas, such as the Ottawa West Junior Music Club and the Hillcrest Music Club.¹⁵² Their performances, open to the public and often held at the Chateau Laurier on Saturday afternoons, helped develop generations of performers.¹⁵³ These young performers often went on to other musical activities in their adult lives, such as community groups, religious choirs, or military band work, and it was through these efforts that a continuum of arts development was maintained in the city.

For professional and semi-professional artists working to establish an arts industry in Ottawa, there were a variety of obstacles to overcome in the capital's unique environment. Federal plans for Confederation Square had demolished Ottawa's last major commercial theatre in 1928.¹⁵⁴ The Great Depression occurred the following year, and was followed by the Second World War (1939 – 1945). Consequently, businesses were focused on problems other than entertainment, and no subsequent theatres were built as replacement. Post-war, the city was now in a position where the only facilities for performance were in school auditoriums, movie houses, skating rinks, and outdoor

they played at night at Glebe Collegiate. It was very exciting to play at night when you are young." From Joan Milliken (University of Ottawa Music Department accompanist and teacher), interview with author, tape recording, 9 January 2004.

¹⁵² Jean Southworth, "Ottawa", EMC 1004a.

¹⁵³ Another organization that encouraged artistic growth was the annual Kiwanis Music Festival, established in Ottawa in 1945.

¹⁵⁴ At the turn-of-the-century, Ottawa boasted of a grand opera house that was "designed by J.B. McElfrick & Son of New York in Italian Renaissance style, [with] 1,733 seats, including two balconies, ten private boxes, and four loge boxes. The stage was equipped with a large curtain, fifty adjustable scenic panels, and an elaborate lighting system. It was patronized by Governors General and Prime Ministers, the elite and the ordinary, and hosted touring groups and actors from Canada, the U.S., England and France." In 1928, under Prime Minister Mackenzie King's orders, the Russell Theatre was torn down to provide space for the federal Confederation Square Development. In so doing, King destroyed Ottawa's only legitimate theatre for civic cultural affairs. From James Noonan, "Russell Theatre", in Eugene Benson and L. W. Conolly, eds., *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Theatre* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 478-479.

parks. The lack of affordable and suitable stage facilities and galleries was thus the foremost problem for Ottawa artists, for without these performances and exhibitions were curtailed not only for local presenters but also for visiting artists. Professionals also required agents to promote them but few worked in the city because of the limited local market environment. In addition, the unique Ottawa environment meant an availability of federal entertainment for which the city did not have to pay. For these three reasons -- lack of suitable facilities as production and performance venues, limited commercial performance opportunities, and a federally funded competitor -- there was a minimum of interest in municipal and business investments for local arts infrastructure development. Nonetheless, private individuals and volunteer organizations worked to carve out a space for professional effort.

One group that had long played the game of cultural politics and had negotiated successfully in the local, national and international cultural sphere was the Morning Music Club, begun in 1892 as a ladies' concert-presenting organization, and in 1962 renamed the Pro Musica Society.¹⁵⁵ Over the decades, the Club specialized in presenting small ensembles to Ottawa audiences and as such, worked essentially as a non-profit concert producer in an exclusive setting. It presented Canadian, American and European soloists, such as the Beaux Arts Trio, Glenn Gould, Janet Baker and Marion Anderson. Initially, artists performed in private homes, but as this type of entertainment grew in popularity, the Club rented the auditoriums of Glebe Collegiate, the High School of Commerce, and Fisher Park High School for presentations.

¹⁵⁵ Beyond the work of the Morning Music Club, there was a second concert-presenting group called the Ottawa Music Club (est. 1930s). It presented four concerts a year, and featured Canadian artists.

Although it “brought many of the world’s most prominent musicians to Ottawa,”¹⁵⁶ one difficulty that arose in concert presenting circles was the ill regard with which Ottawa was viewed by foreign impresarios (such as Sol Hurok of Columbia Artists’ Management Inc.). Ottawa’s lack of a strong base of indigenous talent and the lack of professional staff in institutional positions that could promote the sector cast the capital city with the stigma of “colonial.” The Club worked actively to counter this attitude and to build an informed audience base in Ottawa. Nonetheless, the agents decided who and what should be performed where, and contract artists often had little say over their agents’ decisions, believing Ottawa audiences wouldn’t recognize quality.¹⁵⁷

Professional actress Aline Van Dine remembers

... when Alice Dexter was with the group (her husband was editor of the *Citizen* newspaper), we [Pro Musica] wrote to Columbia Artists Association and asked for Janet Baker to come and sing for us. Baker sent us her intended program, but the Pro Musica committee rejected it as fluff and wrote welcoming her but asking for a different program. Baker wrote back and said how relieved she was that they wanted art songs: her manager Sol Hurok had told her what to sing, and he figured the people in Ottawa wouldn’t know the difference!¹⁵⁸

While improving international perception was one goal of Ottawa’s volunteer agents, another was increasing national exposure. One of the first major efforts for professional arts development in this regard in Ottawa was the National Council of Jewish Women Ottawa (NCJWO) Art Exhibition and Sale, held at the Assembly Hall, Lansdowne Park. Ottawa artist and art collector Faye Loeb (wife of businessman Jules Loeb, of Loeb grocery stores) was in 1957 inspired to create a not-for-profit art show in

¹⁵⁶ Southworth, “Ottawa”, EMC 1004c

¹⁵⁷ For further information about the classical music industry, see Norman Lebrecht, *When the Music Stops: Managers, Maestros and the Corporate Murder of Classical Music* (London: Simon & Schuster Ltd., 1996)

¹⁵⁸ Aline Van Dine, interview by author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 20 February 2004.

Ottawa. It would feature work from all the best visual artists in Canada. Loeb recounted what the business community thought about the idea.

I went to see John Robertson of Robertson Galleries, told him what I had in mind, and he said I wouldn't sell ten pictures because Ottawa wasn't ready to buy paintings. Well, I went on my merry way for a year, contacted all the artists, invited everybody from the Federal Cabinet, and sold tickets to the public.¹⁵⁹

Loeb's perseverance resulted in success. On 10 June 1958, with the help of hundreds of NCJWO volunteers, the first "Exhibition and Sale" opened under the patronage of Governor General Vincent Massey.¹⁶⁰

It was a very dressy, black tie affair. We sold 130 paintings in a little over two hours. The artists sent us three works each, and they were in different categories of price. We had the Group of Seven, and many others. The prices were reasonable, between \$50.00 and \$200.00, and made people very art conscious. It was a juried affair, with honorary advisors such as Alan Jarvis, A.Y. Jackson, Henry Masson, Arthur Lismer, Carl Schaeffer and Stanley Cosgrove and the National Gallery director Charles Comfort. Seventy-five per cent of the proceeds were returned to the artists, and \$450.00 was awarded in prizes for the best works submitted.¹⁶¹

Prior to this event, almost all professional art shows had been held in private homes. It was under the auspices of the NCJWO that art became public, and through the efforts of dedicated volunteers, the annual show continued successfully for several decades (and continues today as the Elmwood School Art Show). As Ottawa's first "open" not-for-profit art exhibition, it proved to be a first-rate vehicle and catalyst for the growth and understanding of art and an introduction to Ottawa of Canada's artists.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Faye Loeb, taped telephone conversation with author, 5 February 2004.

¹⁶⁰ Ottawa Jewish Community Centre (hereafter JCC) Archives, RG4.08.NC, Ottawa Section, Vol. 1, File: National Council of Jewish Women Ottawa (hereafter NCJWO) Art Exhibition and Sale Show.

¹⁶¹ Loeb, interview.

¹⁶² JCC Archives: RG4.08.NC NCJW, Ottawa Section, Vol. 1.

The federal presence offered some advantages. The American Federation of Musicians Union, Local 180 Ottawa (AF of M) controlled much of the professional music making in the city and the majority of its members were from the federally funded Central Band of the Royal Canadian Air Force,¹⁶³ the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Band,¹⁶⁴ and the Governor General's Foot Guards Band, among others.¹⁶⁵ Through the AF of M and the Music Performance Trust Fund of the Recording Industries, benefit concerts were offered to the community (such as those mentioned in the Lakeside Festival of the Arts series), at no cost to the municipality.¹⁶⁶ In terms of leadership, the union was perhaps even more influential in the city's professional cultural development than the Canada Council, because the union allowed professionals to work with amateur (not paid) musicians in concert situations. This was a concession in Canada because, aside from the military bands, there were few professional musicians except in Toronto or Montreal.¹⁶⁷ Without this corps, the capital, which did not even have a police band as

¹⁶³ Following the war, the large number of armed forces' bands was reduced and by 1964 only two remained: the Northwest Air Command Band in Winnipeg and the Central Band of the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) in Ottawa. In 1968, the RCAF Band was renamed the National Band of the Canadian Armed Forces, and in 1970 became known as the Central Band of the Canadian Forces. The Central Band performed for visiting heads of state and other dignitaries, and served as cultural diplomats. In Helmut Kallman et al., "Bands", EMC 79c.

¹⁶⁴ The RCMP Band moved to Ottawa full-time in 1958. In 1962 it began giving summertime concerts on the lawn of the Supreme Court. From Kallman, EMC 81c.

¹⁶⁵ The GGFG Band was formed from members of the Ottawa Brigade Artillery Band, and made its debut on 15 June 1872.

¹⁶⁶ As another example, in March 1957, former Ottawa Philharmonic Orchestra conductor Eugene Kash provided concerts to 900 children from three municipal community centres, through the Music Performance Trust Fund. In *Civic Recreation Record Ottawa*, Vol. V, No. 4, 15 April 1957.

¹⁶⁷ "The only conflict was in the RCMP Band whose members couldn't belong to the musicians' union and that made many of them unhappy because they couldn't play in dance bands and earn some extra money. But the members of the Air Force were allowed, unlike in the States." From Jim Milne, interview by author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 9 February 2004.

many other cities in Canada did, would have been largely without music for parades, fêtes, and other city or state functions.¹⁶⁸

One local group that would not have existed without this federal addition was the Ottawa Philharmonic Orchestra (OPO). Founded in 1944 as a non-profit ensemble, its musicians came from the Royal Air Force, the National Film Board, the National Research Council and the Civic Service Recreation Association.¹⁶⁹ With the problems in Canada (i.e. lack of trained musicians), the Musicians Union made special arrangements and allowed joint amateur and professional performances. According to Jim Milne, former conductor of the Governor General's Foot Guards Band, by the mid 1950s "all of the winds and some of the strings in the OPO were from the full-time employee military bands in the city."¹⁷⁰ Choice of repertoire for the OPO depended upon who was available and the instrument played.

In 1957, the public demand for higher musicianship and performance values prompted a change in direction and leadership, and German conductor Thomas Mayer replaced Canadian Eugene Kash (conductor from 1950 – 1957), who had replaced the group's founder, Allard de Ridder (1944 – 1950). During Mayer's first 1957-58 season the orchestra advertised itself as the *New Ottawa Philharmonic Orchestra*, under the distinguished patronage of His Excellency the Right Honourable Vincent Massey, C.H., Governor General of Canada. In 1957 the OPO applied for, and received, Canada Council's first grants for \$15,000.00, to assist with the reorganization of the orchestra to

¹⁶⁸ Other smaller ensembles did exist, such as the CBC Studio Orchestra at the Chateau Laurier Hotel, and the New Chamber Music Ensemble (est. 1955), which put on chamber music concerts.

¹⁶⁹ OCA, Ottawa City Council, *By-Law*, 9625 (1946) and 9794 (1947). In 1946 and in 1947, the Ottawa Philharmonic Orchestra received municipal grants of \$1,000.00 each year, and then stopped. Municipal grants for any type of cultural activity did not begin again until 1958.

¹⁷⁰ Milne, interview.

a professional basis, and to extend concerts to Ottawa Valley communities and schools. With this, the OPO established a nucleus of 36 full-time professionals (both military and non-military musicians). Conductor Mayer was very enthusiastic about the orchestra's future prospects:

The overwhelming success of the current season has been reflected in many ways. Season ticket sales increased by one-third and box office sales also increased substantially, resulting in a sold-out house for the third concert and a near sell-out for the fourth. A sell-out is expected for the concert tonight. In all, the Orchestra has played 44 engagements including public and school concerts in Ottawa and nearby communities and on the Trans-Canada network of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Excluding those listening to the radio concerts an estimated 24,000 people have heard the orchestra this season. [...] The contract season with musicians is being extended to 22 weeks in order to make possible six public concerts in the series [...] with arrangements for guest artists [...] the series will conclude with a performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with a massed chorus in which the principal choirs of the city will participate. It is expected that the demand for tickets for the 1958-59 season will be brisk.¹⁷¹

From 1958 to 1960, the OPO received \$50,400.00 from the Canada Council,¹⁷² and \$15,000.00 from the municipality¹⁷³ and its 1959 - 1960 concert schedule grew to 60 concerts and included live, weekly CBC broadcasts. But the growth and transition were too sudden and in mid-year, when the orchestra board could not pay the musicians' agreed-upon union salaries, as well as meet the OPO's fixed market costs for marketing and rental of commercial facilities, the orchestra folded.¹⁷⁴

The OPO's 1960 story was similar to that of the Canadian Repertory Theatre (CRT) of four years earlier in 1956. In both instances, professionally trained artists

¹⁷¹ Program notes for the Ottawa Philharmonic Orchestra concert on Thursday, 27 March 1958 at the Capitol Theatre. Program courtesy of Janet Roy, former OPO and NAC violinist.

¹⁷² Canada Council Archives, *Annual Reports of the Canada Council*, (1957 to 1962).

¹⁷³ In 1946, the OPO received \$1,000.00 (*By-Law* 9625), in 1947, \$1,000.00 (*By-Law* 9794), in 1958, \$3,500.00 (*By-Law* 104-58), in 1959, \$4,500.00 (*By-Law* 70-59), in 1960, \$5,000.00 (*By-Law* 113-60).

¹⁷⁴ Elizabeth A Baird, "Ottawa Philharmonic Orchestra," in EMC 1006b.

provided the city with a professional arts product, and as non-profit organizations, the members themselves did not make a profit or loss; it was the organization that benefited (or not). For the OPO for several years, musicians waived or lowered their fees, for the sheer sake of keeping the orchestral ensemble going in the city. The wealth of individual talent made the orchestra one of the few that the Canada Council deemed worthy in Canada of professional funding, and that endowment brought prestige to the orchestra and to the capital. But unlike the CRT in 1956, which had no recourse to government investments, the OPO did receive the benefit of both the Canada Council and municipal funds. However, it came too late and was insufficient; the orchestra lost its members, its corporate status, and all its assets.

The challenges facing the development of an arts industry in Ottawa were overcome by organizations such as the Pro Musica Society and the National Council of Jewish Women of Ottawa. These organizations were staffed by women who volunteered their time for the good of Ottawa. Activities were restricted to time frames and venue costs that were limited, but specific to the needs of their audiences. For this reason, they succeeded in providing opportunities for professional artistic activity in the city. The OPO, on the other hand, had a larger mandate and greater needs, for it required facilities and resources on a near constant basis. Volunteers also assisted, and professional musicians waived or lowered their fees, but the demand on Ottawa's limited arts infrastructure system was too much, and the company ceased.

The final organization of this period that sought to develop a professional arts infrastructure in Ottawa was the Theatre Club, the citizens' group that had fought but lost the battle of Ottawa's Canadian Repertory Theatre (closed March 1956). During the

remainder of 1956 it regrouped its assets, reformed its objectives, and reorganized its volunteers. It supported the municipal programs in theatre, and applauded the partnerships that fostered its growth, especially the Junior and Senior Drama Classes that competed in the Ottawa Drama Festivals at the University of Ottawa Academic Hall.¹⁷⁵ Future plans of the Club were to build a professional playhouse for the city, open a school of theatre, and provide a system of dependable and recurring financial aid for aspiring actors.¹⁷⁶ In May 1957, the Club launched the Theatre Foundation, and received its charter in the summer of 1957. The Foundation was assisted in its work by the Ottawa Theatre Arts Guild (est. 1957), which ran two theatre schools, produced two full-length plays, and won the highly prestigious Calvert Award in the Eastern Ontario Drama Festival.¹⁷⁷

In 1958 – 1959, the Theatre Foundation began to work more closely with the city, which was planning a “Boston Commons” type development with a theatre, civic centre, convention hall, and park facilities at the Green Island and environs sites. City Controller Sam Berger, President of the Theatre Foundation, and Controller Ernie Jones, promoted the Foundation’s choice of the northeast corner of King Edward and Cathcart for a theatre house. They also suggested a concert hall be built on the Ottawa Transit Commission property near Kent and Albert Streets. But the city was not alone in its ability to make

¹⁷⁵ The municipal drama program offered several community centre competitions for emerging troupes. The Ottawa Junior Drama Festival (students aged 16 and under), the Annual Drama Festival (students age 16 and over) and the One-Act Festival were held at the University of Ottawa Academic Hall. The Eastern Ontario Drama Festival also offered a competitive venue and was the stepping-stone for the city’s Community Players (young adults) to be accepted to compete in the national Dominion Drama Festival (DDF) competitions. In *Civic Recreation Record Ottawa*, Vol. V, No. 4, 15 April 1957, and *Civic Recreation and Parks Record Ottawa*, Vol. VI, No. 1, 15 Jan. 1958.

¹⁷⁶ PAC, Theatre Foundation of Ottawa, R9756 1, File: Canadian Repertory Theatre / Theatre Trust Fund ca 1955 – 1957, #6 of 6.

¹⁷⁷ For further information about the Eastern Ontario Drama Festival, see: <http://members.aol.com/yodler1/bestprod.htm>. Accessed 4 June 2004.

decisions for its municipal benefit, because “purchases of land, or transfers, had to be arranged with the National Capital Commission (NCC), the Canadian Pacific Railway and private owners, in order to complete the undertaking.”¹⁷⁸ The matter thus needed to be approved by the federal government planning authorities, which effectively put them on hold while they debated the issue.

Two years later, discussion was finished and the Green Island plans were scuppered. In December 1961, the Foundation announced new plans for another theatre, which could be housed in the soon-to-be-redundant Union Train Station. The proposed theatre plans featured an auditorium of 3,000 seats, a theatre with 900 seats, and a playhouse for 200. For the Foundation, the plans were part of a Confederation centennial project and there was much excitement in the press about this future development. But Union Station was federal property, and again, the Theatre Foundation proposal had to be submitted to the National Capital Commission (NCC) and other federal government departments for discussion.¹⁷⁹

At the same time, the Foundation applied to the Canada Council for a grant with which to conduct a survey of cultural needs for the capital. The Foundation was taking a pro-active approach to Ottawa’s cultural facility situation and its request for survey funds focused on achieving scientific results that would lead to solutions for the city. But the Canada Council “decided against it, since the NCC had the planning in hand.” Dr. Albert W. Trueman, Director of the Canada Council, explained: “The Foundation’s activities have undoubtedly had their part in bringing about this action by the NCC. Your

¹⁷⁸ W.M. Arnott and Patrick Best, “Green Island Development Includes Outdoor Theatre,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 26 March 1959, p. 1

¹⁷⁹ In the 1950s and 1960s, the National Capital Commission was relocating Ottawa’s train lines to the Alta Vista area and at the end of that process, the Union Station would be available as a possible theatre site.

organization may feel that it really has been productive of a good result.” Samuel Berger, Foundation President, realizing that the NCC had appropriated their idea, responded: “The prospect of a [NCC] national theatre will not change the work of the Foundation. It will continue to raise funds for either a playhouse of its own or an endowment-yielding income to foster the performing arts.”¹⁸⁰ From the exchange, it was evident the NCC and its plans for the capital were not ready to take direction from a resident organization, responding to local needs.

In the spring of 1962, Prime Minister John Diefenbaker proposed that individuals and organizations “should come forth with ideas to commemorate Canada’s Centennial.” The Theatre Foundation’s plans for a Centennial Theatre in Ottawa were one of many that were drafted for the Centennial Commission, in aid of development of an arts industry in Ottawa. For the Ottawa Department of Recreation and Parks, it “conceived the idea that Brewer Park be made into an outstanding playground and be renamed Centennial Park.”¹⁸¹ The requests and proposals for municipally funded cultural recreation facilities were laid aside as possible future ideas.

¹⁸⁰ “Arts Centre for City: 4,000-seater planned,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 9 December 1961, p. 1.

¹⁸¹ OCA, *Civic Recreation and Parks Record Ottawa*, Vol. X, No. 5, 15 May 1962, p. 32.

Conclusion

In the half decade after the founding of the Canada Council, Ottawa's amateur arts environment improved due to a major marketing initiative (the Lakeside Festival of the Arts). This program introduced *la crème-de-la-crème* of Ottawa's local talent, and demand for this product increased year by year. One drawback of the Festival was that it performed in a site that was not a permanent facility, and as audience needs were met, the municipality did not consider capital costs for a civic arts facility. A second problem was its great dependence upon volunteers as unpaid office staff.

For the professional sector, problems were more complicated. There existed no infrastructure for the development and sustainability of a local arts industry in the city, and the local artists had to compete against federally funded competitors. However, with Centennial Year plans on the horizon and rumours of federal capital and programming funds for municipalities, the sector was hopeful for the future.

Chapter Three (1963 – 1967)

By the early 1960s, Ottawa had a lively arts sector of over one hundred large and small, amateur organizations, created by educational and religious institutions, municipal cultural recreation programs, and non-profit arts groups.¹⁸² In much smaller numbers were professional ensembles and artists who made Ottawa their home, and worked as entrepreneurs in the city's market sphere. This primary layer of cultural activity was complemented by arts industry activity by organizations such as the Crawley Films Co., and federal institutions such as the National Film Board, the Canadian Government Exhibition Commission, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the National Gallery, and military bands.

It was unusual in Canada to have a large arts labour force and it occurred in Ottawa only because of the federal government needs. Local amateurs benefited from professional tutelage, but neither professionals nor amateurs had good performance options because the city lacked the proper facilities for long run performances or exhibitions. The city lacked the infrastructure necessary to develop a professional arts industry on the local level. Without this infrastructure, all local successes were temporary and limited in scope.

In the next period, the same factors -- the development of a civic arts marketplace, maturation of the local arts sector, and government interventions and non-interventions -- continued. But the 1960s period was distinctive because Centennial Year and its

¹⁸² There were a number of other cultural organizations in the city that performed largely for their own language or religious communities' benefit. An example of this is the Melodia Choir, a mixed-choir (male and female) formed in 1956 to sing German music. In 1958 this became a male-only choir, entitled Concordia Ottawa. The group still continues in 2004. From Barbara Lorenszowski, "Making Music – Building Bridges: German-Canadian Identities in the Nation's Capital, 1958 – 1999", in Jeff Keshen and Nicole St-Onge, *Ottawa: Making a Capital*. (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2001), pp. 307 – 330.

preparations unleashed a new wave of emotion that changed how Canadians felt and thought about culture. They “demonstrated a hunger for the arts [...] and performing arts organizations and exhibitions of every conceivable type found eager audiences right across the country.”¹⁸³ In the capital city, this was especially true, and the honour of performing or exhibiting there during the centennial celebration motivated much of the decade’s arts activity.

The 1960s period was also distinctive because the municipality of Ottawa responded to new trends in social welfare and this transformed how Ottawa responded to the arts community. As a result of Centennial projects, the evolution of the arts sector, and changes in social governance, Ottawa’s cultural community in the 1960s underwent a major shift in its prospects.

One of the first groups to instigate change in the arts sector’s fortunes was the National Capital Arts Alliance (NCAA), founded on Valentine’s Day in 1963.¹⁸⁴ The concept of the NCAA began in October 1962, when professional artist Faye Loeb met with diplomat Gordon Hamilton Southam to discuss the concert hall situation in Ottawa. Loeb was the mastermind behind the successful, annual NCJWO¹⁸⁵ Art Exhibition and Sale, and Southam had just returned to Canada from a diplomatic posting in Poland as Head of the Information Division at the Department of External Affairs. Southam agreed

¹⁸³ John Hobday, “Reality Check: Time for a Period of Creative Consolidation” in *International Journal of Arts Management*, Vol. 5, No. 1, Fall 2002, p. 5.

¹⁸⁴ The National Capital Arts Alliance (NCAA) was organized after a series of public meetings “designed to stimulate interest in the establishment of an arts centre in the National Capital Region.” At the founding meeting (held in the auditorium of the National Gallery of Canada) a constitution was adopted and 16 members of the Council were elected to manage the affairs of the Arts Alliance. Half of the members were drawn from the community at large; the remainder were all active in one or more local artistic organizations and represented the main spheres of artistic activity. From PAC, MG 31 D230, Vol. 13, Hamilton Southam’s papers. File: National Capital Arts Alliance. Sub-File: J.D. B. Harrison, Hon. Secretary Correspondence, 1963, #1 of 2.

¹⁸⁵ NCJWO is the author’s acronym for the group, and means the National Council of Jewish Women of Ottawa.

to pursue the matter, and requested three weeks to find someone to undertake the performing arts centre idea; if not, he would become responsible for it himself. He recounted:

So when Faye Loeb came back, I said I would do it, because I could find no one else who was willing to take the time. There is some family history there – my grandfather had written to J.R. Booth – the lumber baron in the 1920s, and said that we should build a concert hall to commemorate the sacrifices in the late world war. J.R. Booth was not at all interested in it and the idea was dropped. In the 1930s my Uncle Harry again suggested a concert hall and actually produced a drawing for one, but by that time the depression was on and the war was coming and nothing was done. So I grew up thinking there should be a concert hall in Ottawa. And Faye Loeb was absolutely right. It appeared to me that I should get public backing for it, and who better than from the arts organizations, so I set about founding the National Capital Arts Alliance.¹⁸⁶

The NCAA was an organization of leading local arts groups in the region, formed “for public interest, participation and support” and as a means of “making common cause, where suitable, approaches to government and the public in matters affecting the arts.”¹⁸⁷ It was organized to enable a common front among the arts in its policies, and its promotional flyer stated that its objectives were:

¹⁸⁶ Gordon Hamilton Southam, (businessman, diplomat, initiator of National Arts Centre), interview by author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 12 January 2004.

¹⁸⁷ National Capital Arts Alliance Members: From PAC, MG 31 D230, Vol. 13, Hamilton Southam's papers. File: National Capital Arts Alliance (NCAA). Sub-File: J.D. B. Harrison, Hon. Secretary Correspondence, 1963, #1 of 2.

The groups that were involved with the NCAA by 8 May 1963 were:

Advisory Committee on Planning

Carleton University (Dr. Oppenheimer); Civil Service Recreational Association; Columbia Artists Management of Canada; Jewish Community Centre; Treble Clef; Tremblay Concerts; University of Ottawa

Associate Members

Le Duc School of Ballet (Hull); Tremblay Concerts Limited (Earl Crowe); Treble Clef (Harvey Glatt); Robertson Galleries (J.K.B. Robertson)

Music

Festival de Musique de Hull; Harmelodica Music Club; Jeunesses Musicales (Ottawa-Hull-Eastview); Musical Arts Club of Ottawa; Orchestra Guild of Ottawa; Orpheus Operatic Society, Inc.; Ottawa Branch of the Ontario Registered Music Teachers Association; Ottawa Choral Society; Ottawa Grand Opera Association; Ottawa Music Club; Ottawa Music Festival Association; Ottawa Philharmonic Orchestra Society; Ottawa Traditional Jazz Society; Pro Musica Society of Ottawa; Royal Conservatory of Music Alumni Ottawa Branch; Studio Singers.

... to see the national capital region endowed with such centres for the arts as it needs and can support; to promote collaboration among individuals and non-profit organizations concerned or interested in the arts; and to foster and encourage the arts for the benefit of those who practise them and those who enjoy them.¹⁸⁸

In an 8 May 1963 letter to Albert W. Trueman, Director of the Canada Council,¹⁸⁹

Southam outlined the cultural facility situation in Ottawa:

Some years ago (in 1952) a group of public-spirited citizens led by the Rt. Hon. Vincent Massey attempted to establish in Ottawa an International Festival of Music and the Arts. The attempt failed primarily because there was no building in Ottawa in which such a festival could be mounted. There was then and there is now in Ottawa one very large movie theatre and various school auditoria which are capable of being used for concerts and drama, but apart from the small Little Theatre, there is no building in the whole of the National Capital region which is designed and readily available for these purposes.

Southam then proposed a course of action.

Anyone proposing to further the idea must therefore be able to give informed answers to a number of basic questions, such as (1) Does a metropolitan area which includes the three cities of Ottawa, Hull and Eastview need a theatre, a concert hall, an auditorium suitable for conventions or a combination of these three? (2) What would it be likely to cost to build and maintain? (3) Where should it be built?¹⁹⁰

Advisory Committee on Literature and History

L'Alliance française d'Ottawa; Association des Femmes diplômées des Universités; Canadian Authors' Association; Société des Écrivains canadiens Section Ottawa-Hull; Société d'Étude et de la Conférence d'Ottawa-Hull; University Women's Club of Ottawa; Literature Study Group and Drama Reading Clubs

Advisory Committee on Drama and Dance

Cathedral Players; Child Drama and Children's Theatre Association; Classical Ballet Concert Group of Ottawa, Inc.; Drama Guild of the University of Ottawa; Jewish Community Centre Theatre Guild; La Société dramatique de l'Université d'Ottawa; Le Duc Studio; National Ballet Guild (Ottawa Branch); Teatr Polski W Ottawie (Polish Theatre in Ottawa); Théâtre de Pont Neuf; Theatre Foundation of Ottawa. Ottawa Little Theatre declined the membership.

Visual Arts and Crafts

National Gallery Association of Ottawa; Ottawa Film Council; Ottawa Film Society; Ottawa Valley Mineral Club; Ottawa Valley Weavers Guild; Professional Artists, Sculptors and Craftsmen Group (Art Price); Robertson Galleries

¹⁸⁸ Ottawa Room, Ottawa Public Library, National Capital Arts Alliance 1963-1964 promotion flyer (photocopy).

¹⁸⁹ Albert W. Trueman was Director of the Canada Council from 1957 to 1965.

¹⁹⁰ PAC, Southam Papers, MG 31, D 230, Vol. 13, File: National Capital Arts Alliance, D. B. Harrison, Hon. Secretary Correspondence, 1963 #1 of 2.

In the letter, Southam further outlined the NCAA's proposed efforts to address and alleviate the situation, and requested Canada Council to provide the funding for a professional survey to be undertaken. A similar request to the Canada Council had been made a year and a half earlier by the Theatre Foundation of Ottawa, but that had been denied because the Canada Council thought the "National Capital Commission (NCC) had the matter in hand."¹⁹¹ This time, realizing the NCC plans included possible demolition for Union Station (once the train lines were removed from downtown and the new station opened in Alta Vista), the Canada Council approved the NCAA request.¹⁹²

In November 1963, the consultant reported to the NCAA that Ottawa was indeed deficient in performing arts spaces for the region's 75 major arts organizations. The need for government intervention was confirmed, and on 11 December 1963 Southam learned that Cabinet approved the NCAA's recommendation for a performing arts centre. Southam proceeded to find land for it.¹⁹³

In 1964, the municipality became involved more formally with the NCAA plans. On New Year's Day 1964, Ottawa Mayor Whitton met with Prime Minister Pearson. In a later *Ottawa Journal* interview, Whitton said that she knew "there was a movement afoot to put the [arts] centre on Lady Grey Drive but if that had happened, it would have disappeared in the Ottawa River, never to be heard from again" and she was "determined that the [intended] property was not going to be used by exploiters." Whitton and Pearson

¹⁹¹ "Arts Centre for City: 4,000-seater planned," *Ottawa Citizen*, 9 December 1961, p. 1.

¹⁹² The survey cost was estimated at \$25,000.00, and the request to Canada Council was \$20,000.00; the Alliance had already raised \$5,025.00. Southam wanted the professional survey to give justification to build a centre in Ottawa. The Canada Council provided \$5,000.00 for the survey. From Canada Council *Annual Report*, 1963-1964 and PAC, Southam Papers, MG 31, D 230, Vol. 13, File: National Capital Arts Alliance, D. B. Harrison, Hon. Secretary Correspondence, 1963 #1 of 2.

¹⁹³ Southam, interview.

decided “the future arts centre should be on the six and one quarter acres on Confederation Square.”¹⁹⁴ Once that agreement was reached, Southam transferred from External Affairs and began to work for the Secretary of State in February 1964, as coordinator of the NAC project.¹⁹⁵

One of the not-for-profit member organizations of the NCAA was the Festival of Performing Arts (FPA), established in April 1962. Interest amongst it and other alliance members was initially quite high, as local artists had been lobbying for many years for a civic performing arts centre. Other public, collaborative approaches to the government regarding cultural matters for Ottawa’s local benefit had not worked in the past, but there was hope that with Centennial Year approaching, this one might.¹⁹⁶

But by the mid-1960’s, with the growing realization that the arts centre scheme would not meet local needs, there was reluctance on many members’ parts to remain with the NCAA. For Southam, this withdrawal invoked frustration, as the NCAA bulletin of 11 February 1965 reveals.

Perhaps the most important problem at this time, not only for the Alliance but for all residents of the National Capital area, is the question of local involvement. [...] Since the Government intends to mark the centennial year, not only with the Canadian Centre for the Performing Arts but also with a Festival of the Performing Arts, it is equally important that there is local involvement in the Festival.

For the NCAA work, Southam provided specific directives for the type of assistance required from the local population: “the Council would welcome concrete

¹⁹⁴ The land chosen was on the site of the former Ottawa City Hall, which burned down in 1931. Quotation from Alixe Carter, *Ottawa Journal*, 2 June 1969, p. 21.

¹⁹⁵ When Southam took over responsibility to organize the NAC, he passed the leadership of the group to Bill Teron, but according to Southam, Teron was unable to keep the momentum going of the group because of a lack of a mutual goal. From Southam, interview.

¹⁹⁶ Members’ fees and donations supported the NCAA.

proposals from the members, including estimates of cost and timing” and he also illustrated how these would help the national capital show.

It is now most important that the work of the NCAA be more intimately related to the needs and development of its member organizations. Participation by local groups in the Festival in 1967 could be a practical demonstration of this and at the same would serve to broaden the scope and experience of the [national] Festival of the Performing Arts.¹⁹⁷

On 1 March 1965, the Executive of the local FPA received a letter from the federal NCAA Executive, which admonished the FPA to do more towards the federal performing arts centre project: “... the council of the NCAA is at this time quite concerned with the lack of involvement of its member organizations with the Arts Centre.”¹⁹⁸ At the FPA meeting on 4 March 1965, Blanche Loeb (musician, and sister-in-law to Faye Loeb), Bill Teron (builder), Earle Crowe (Tremblay Concerts, Inc.), among others, raised concerns about what was expected: were they to plan, organize and manage a Centennial Festival of local amateur talent from the National Capital Region? Their comments revealed confusion about the NCAA agenda and the NCAA request for involvement in the Festival: their FPA time was voluntary and demands would be made. Scepticism existed over the rhetoric regarding local involvement and the proposed arts centre: how many of the little theatre troupes and music and dance groups in the area would in reality be able to perform there? There were concerns about prohibitive rental costs to locals because of union issues within the new centre; concerns that it would only appeal to the highbrows; and the belief that the centre was being set down in a cultural desert because the cultural climate in Ottawa was appalling: “Ottawa was in the unique

¹⁹⁷ PAC, Southam Papers, MG 31, D 230, vol. 15, file: NCAA: Annual Festival of Performing Arts (FPA), 1962-66, no. 1 of 4.

¹⁹⁸ PAC, Southam Papers, MG 31, D 230, vol. 15, file: NCAA: Annual Festival of Performing Arts (FPA), 1962-66, no. 1 of 4.

position of being dependent on a Civil Service population to whom an outing a week was the limit.”¹⁹⁹

While these issues were being pondered at the local level, events for Centennial Year celebrations in Ottawa were being shepherded by federal organizers, with little local cultural sector input. In a confidential brief received by the FPA on 1 August 1965, there were further requests to federal and local agencies to suggest activities for the city that would underscore the national theme. These agencies included the federal government, the Ontario and Quebec provincial governments, city and town councils in the national capital area, the Canada Foundation, the Theatre Foundation of Ottawa, the Civil Service Recreational Association and the National Capital Arts Alliance, as well as local groups such as the FPA.²⁰⁰

Despite their apprehensions, in the end the FPA volunteer members agreed to help organize activities that would match the national focus. With their own funds they set about advertising a “nation-wide competition for a full-length, original Canadian production incorporating music, dance and drama, to be held in conjunction with the 1967 Annual Tulip Festival.”²⁰¹ They also discussed the need for a repertory theatre group to be established, and through a local architectural firm, invested FPA money in a feasibility study regarding housing the repertory group in a temporary theatre tent, similar

¹⁹⁹ PAC, Southam Papers, MG 31, D 230, vol. 15, file: NCAA: Annual Festival of Performing Arts (FPA), 1962-66, no. 1 of 4. The final comment is from Mr. Roberts of the FPA Executive.

²⁰⁰ PAC, Southam Papers, MG 31, D 230, vol. 15, file: NCAA: FPA, No 2 of 4; “Confidential Brief of The Festival of the Performing Arts, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, 1 August 1965.”

²⁰¹ PAC, Southam Papers, MG 31, D 230, vol. 15, file: NCAA: FPA, No. 1 of 4.

to Stratford's first years.²⁰² As the months drew on, further FPA plans were made, but there were growing concerns about budget and NCAA expectations of national excellence from a local amateur group, and so the FPA wrote to the NCAA regarding these. The NCAA response from Southam was unequivocal:

... to sum up, I would suggest that the organization of professional artistic activities at the Centre might best be left with us at this stage, while your organization concentrates on encouraging a high standard of amateur endeavour in Ottawa generally. If you agree with this suggestion, please believe that you may count on our entire cooperation.²⁰³

At the FPA meeting on 16 September 1965, the chastisement from government discouraged the group somewhat, but they decided to send their proposals to the City mayor and councillors, as well as the city's Tourist and Convention Committee.²⁰⁴ Only in Ottawa would the city mayor and councillors be the last resort for municipal cultural requests.

Throughout this time, while it continued its national agenda work, the FPA presented its own annual show, acclaimed critically in the local press. However, difficulties were present. Professional actress Aline Van Dine described the context:

You were invited to perform, and it was very successful. But when it is over, you needed to create it all over again once it was finished. It stopped in 1966, partly because there was no one to organize it. All of the organizations that were involved were voluntary, small groups, busy with their own needs, and there was nobody who was outside who was willing to take this on.²⁰⁵

²⁰² PAC, Southam Papers, MG 31, D 230, vol. 15, file: NCAA: FPA, No. 3 of 4, "Outline Feasibility Proposal for Temporary Theatre": Firm of Schoeler, Barkham and Heaton, Ottawa Architects, drew up plans of a tent, involving use of an invention in triodetic connectors by Art Fentiman and Sons, Ottawa firm.

²⁰³ PAC, Southam Papers, MG 31, D 230, vol. 15, file: NCAA: FPA, No. 4 of 4. Letter from Hamilton Southam, NCAA President to Blanche Loeb, FPA President, on 2 September 1965.

²⁰⁴ PAC, Southam Papers, MG 31, D 230, vol. 15, file: NCAA: FPA, No. 4 of 4.

²⁰⁵ Aline Van Dine, interview.

For both its national and local efforts, timing and circumstance were against the FPA. In 1966, the group was forced to disband, on the eve of the Centennial.

In parallel with the NCAA plans, upcoming Centennial Year celebrations continued to be organized on all government levels. The main federal political reason for the celebration of Centennial Year was to provide a feeling of unity to the country, to be achieved through the depiction of its many accomplishments on both large (EXPO '67) and small (provincial and local shows) scales. To enable this agenda, in December 1962, the government established the Canadian Corporation for the 1967 World Exhibition, also known as EXPO '67.²⁰⁶ Next, in early 1963, the Secretary of State assumed responsibility for culture and federal cultural agencies, and agreed to act as a centralized organizing body for Canada's impending Centennial Year celebrations.²⁰⁷ This included the Centennial Commission, formed as a crown corporation in 1963, whose goal "was to coordinate and administer centennial projects for the federal government, and joint ones with the provinces."²⁰⁸

The Centennial Commission's proposed agenda and the funding allocated for it were significant. There were plans for a \$3 million arts festival in Ottawa, and \$135

²⁰⁶ "On 13 November 1962, Canada was chosen by the International Bureau to be the host of the 1967 Universal and International Exhibition (Expo '67). In light of this situation, Parliament authorized the incorporation of the Canadian Corporation for the 1967 World Exhibition (CCWE) on 20 December 1962. The Government of Canada, the Government of the Province of Quebec, and the City of Montreal concluded an agreement on 18 January 1963 defining their obligations and responsibilities to the Corporation and establishing the contribution of each of those levels of government to the funds required for the capital and operational expenditures of the Corporation." For further information about EXPO '67, see http://www.collectionscanada.ca/02/02012002/0201200214_e.html. Accessed 1 August 2004.

²⁰⁷ Canadian Conference of the Arts, *Crossroads 2001: Arts and Cultural Policy in Canada – the Last Half Century and Beyond* (Ottawa: Canadian Conference of the Arts, 2001), p. 26.

²⁰⁸ The Centennial Commission was "a national committee composed of citizens from across Canada who met periodically with the commission and its board of directors. It wound up in 1968." http://www.library.ubc.ca/archives/u_arch/mackenzi.html#centennial. Accessed 3 November 2004.

million was allocated for local and provincial projects across the country.²⁰⁹ Funding was provided especially for those projects that promoted the construction of “concert halls, museums, art galleries, libraries and cultural centres,” because “Canada had decided to equip itself with a major cultural infrastructure [...] as an intelligent way of ensuring the celebration’s permanence.”²¹⁰ With capital building projects now assumed by the federal government, the province of Ontario announced the formation of a complementary arts programming body. In 1963, the Ontario Arts Council (OAC) was formed to act as the primary funding organization for professional and amateur arts activity in Ontario.²¹¹

These new developments for cultural support were unprecedented in Canada, and concerns were raised about this higher level of government intervention in cultural affairs.²¹² It was thought in some quarters that Canada should avoid interference in the whole matter. To address these concerns, in June 1963, the Department of the Secretary of State requested that Louis Boyd Neel, Dean of the Royal Conservatory of Music (RCM) in Toronto,²¹³ speak to delegates at a conference held to discuss EXPO ’67 plans. Neel argued that the popularization of culture began in Shakespeare’s day, and the former patrons of art (the church, aristocracy and the wealthy) were no longer the only ones who received its benefit.

²⁰⁹ D. Paul Schaefer and André Fortier, *Review of Federal Policies for the Arts in Canada, 1944 – 1988* (Ottawa: Canadian Conference of the Arts, 1989), p. 19.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Saskatchewan established Canada’s first provincial arts council in 1948; followed by Quebec in 1962 and the Ontario Arts Council (OAC) in 1963. The OAC was modelled after the Canada Council. From Canadian Conference of the Arts, *Crossroads 2001: Arts and Cultural Policy in Canada – the Last Half Century and Beyond* (Ottawa: Canadian Conference of the Arts, 2001), p. 26.

²¹² With the exception of the National Gallery of Art and the Canada Council, the country up to this time had not had a history of funding the arts (literary and visual arts, dance, drama, music, etc.) and these new developments for cultural support were unprecedented in their munificence.

²¹³ Louis Boyd Neel was Dean of the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto from 1953 to 1971.

Historically, the idea of a public art gallery, library or concert was a recent innovation, and up to the end of the 18th century the idea that the public could gain admission was unheard of. Concerts took place in churches, in courts and in mansions of nobility, and they footed the bill. It was only in theatre that we find the public paying for admission, even in Shakespeare's time, so that the dramatic art has endeavoured to be self-supporting for a longer time.²¹⁴

Neel went on to describe the relationship between government support and education, where "in countries of the extreme Right, their governments have frowned upon subsidy of the arts in any form and the consequence has been that it was only the privileged classes in these countries who ever had a chance to appreciate the arts," whereas in enlightened countries "the arts formed an important aspect of education." In Great Britain, as in Canada, the First World War and then the Depression destroyed private fortunes, and private patrons could no longer take the initiative for arts funding; many arts organizations disbanded or ceased altogether at that time. In 1946, the United Kingdom responded to public pressure to maintain artistic traditions, and public or government patronage began as a way to stem the tide of decline. Canada followed this model, and government support evolved in 1957 when the Canada Council was established.²¹⁵ In conclusion to his historical overview, Neel suggested that in an economy and society focused on mass production,

...official support for arts is a difficult thing to initiate. When things are tangible, such as a work of visual art or library holdings, then they are easy for the public to grasp. But theatre, dance and music have ephemeral natures, and whereas a book or a masterpiece can hang in a gallery and appreciate, a concert does not appreciate. Furthermore, the medium that produces the concert is an enormously costly machine consisting of a large group of very highly specialized people who

²¹⁴ Boyd Neel, "Government Support of Culture and the Arts." *Canadian Public Administration, Journal of the Institute of Public Administration of Canada*, June 1963, Volume VI, Number 2, pp. 125 – 128.

²¹⁵ The Arts Council of Great Britain received its Royal Charter in 1946, and was successor to the Committee for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts, which was established in January 1940, to provide "cultural societies finding difficulty in maintaining their activities." For further information about the development of the Arts Council of Great Britain, see: <http://www.nal.vam.ac.uk/acgb/acgb.html>. Accessed 6 July 2004.

have devoted many years to study to produce these particular sounds of the composer's imagination.²¹⁶

Neel proposed that cultural support had precedent in Western society, and what was needed now was the creation and maintenance of a middle ground for culture, between a marketplace ethic and social welfare.

While these activities took place on the provincial and federal levels, the City of Ottawa organized its own civic benefit plans for Centennial Year. These included the Recreation Department's re-development of Brewer Park into Centennial Park, and the re-development of Lansdowne Park. On the Lansdowne site, the city planned a \$10 million dollar convention hall and exhibition space for corporate trade shows and other activities, stands for the new Ottawa Rough Riders football team, and a 10,000-seat rink for the Ottawa '67s junior hockey club. Dismissed from the municipal agenda were plans for a cultural facility. The recognition that there was this massive competitor who was not attached to the local Ottawa scene because it was a federal creature, was of no consequence to the municipality. Where other cities across Canada were building galleries, concert halls, theatres, libraries and museums with Centennial funds,²¹⁷ Ottawa's municipal Centennial projects included not construction but rather demolition of two local and long-standing, performance sites.

The first to disappear was the Lansdowne Park Band Shell, which for decades had

²¹⁶ Neel, p. 128.

²¹⁷ While the Lansdowne Bandstand and the Ottawa Auditorium were removed from the Ottawa arts scene and the Civic Centre was built for trade shows, in other parts of the country, state-of-the-arts cultural facilities were erected that featured their resident companies and hosted touring arts companies. In 1957, the Stratford Theatre Festival Playhouse opened, followed by the facility at Niagara-on-the-Lake for the Shaw Festival, in 1962. In 1963, both the Vancouver Playhouse and the Halifax Neptune Theatre opened; in 1964, the Charlottetown Confederation Centre; in 1965, the City of Edmonton opened the Citadel, followed by Regina's Globe Theatre in 1966; in 1967, the Saidye Bronfman Centre in Montreal opened as well as the St. John's Arts and Culture Centre in St. John's, Newfoundland. In 1968, Theatre Calgary and Theatre New Brunswick opened. The first Guelph Festival was also held in 1968, thanks in part to Centennial funds. For the local Ottawa artists, the National Library premiered its new auditorium, which was available for local rental.

been the site of many popular outdoor shows. Jim Milne, former conductor of the Governor General's Foot Guards Band, remembered when "there were public concerts by the Ottawa Philharmonic Orchestra, sometimes visiting orchestras, and military concerts at Lansdowne. People would mostly sit in their cars and listen to the concerts."²¹⁸

The second performance site to be levelled in 1967 was the 5,000-seat Ottawa Auditorium on Catherine Street.²¹⁹ From 1923, the Ottawa Auditorium had served as a hockey rink for the Ottawa Senators, and also as the city's largest performing venue.²²⁰ The Ottawa Auditorium was a venue for concerts by Elvis Presley, Bob Dylan, Percy Faith and his Orchestra, and many others, as well as local arts groups, such as the Ottawa Little Symphony (1928 – 1933), the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra (1933 – 1935), the Ottawa Choral Union (1939 – 1958), the Ottawa Philharmonic Orchestra (1944 – 1960), the Ottawa Choral Society (1957 -), the Central Children's Choir of Ottawa (1958 -), the RCMP Band (1958 -), and the Ottawa Youth Orchestra (1960 -).

With their respective Centennial agendas, the federal, provincial and municipal governments focused on their interests, and the local arts sector continued to function autonomously. During the 1940s and 1950s, without the provision of permanent arts facilities in Ottawa, the arts community had grown proficient at short term, small event programming. This continued in the 1960's. However, in the lead-up to Centennial Year, that programming repertoire changed not only because the traditional high culture definition of culture was being challenged by Canadian cultural nationalism and the

²¹⁸ Milne, interview.

²¹⁹ The Ottawa Auditorium (1923 – 1967) was on the site of what is now the YM/YWCA on Argyle Street.

²²⁰ The second largest site was the 2,528-seat Ottawa Capitol Theatre, a movie theatre at Queen and Bank Streets. It was built in 1919.

increasing influence of mass culture was breaking down old cultural distinctions. Within this *milieu*, several new professional and semi-professional groups developed in the city and a few disbanded. With nearly half of Canada's population under the age of 21, new Ottawa programs focused largely on activities for youths.

In the 1960s, on all cultural levels, new forms of art and art projects were being developed. Some funding was available from the Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council, and from within the municipal cultural recreation program, but the majority of effort in Ottawa was market based. A small, chronological listing shows the variety of talent at work in the city.

For instrumentalists, out of the ashes of the Ottawa Philharmonic Orchestra rose a younger version, the Ottawa Youth Orchestra, founded in 1960 by Maurice Haycock. In the same year, four University of Ottawa students founded Le Hibou, Ottawa's first coffeehouse, later a centre for the counterculture movement.²²¹ In 1961, Le Hibou received a small Canada Council grant to sponsor readings by seven Canadian poets.²²² It also established a street theatre troupe, an art form uncommon to Ottawa audiences at that time. The Ottawa Choral Society was the city's leading semi-professional choral organization and the only group to receive both municipal and Canada Council grants simultaneously, beginning in 1961.²²³ In 1962, Carleton University unveiled the work of

²²¹ "Le Hibou was started in 1960 by University of Ottawa students Denis Faulkner, George Gordon Lennox, Jean Carrière, and André Jodoin in a small second floor apartment at 544 Rideau Street. It was a gathering place for university students and others who paid a membership fee of \$2.00 to enjoy presentations of music, poetry and theatre. Le Hibou was also a place where young people came to drink coffee, play chess and discuss the issues of the day. Throughout Le Hibou's history, it continued to attract a young crowd. In 1961, the club relocated to the second floor at 248 Bank Street. The first performer was folksinger Tom Kines. By 1965, Le Hibou had moved to 521 Sussex Drive." From Pierre-Paul Lafrenière, (former owner of Le Hibou, co-founder of Ottawa Festival of the Folks), interview by author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 10 December 2003.

²²² Canada Council, *Annual Report* 1961-1962.

²²³ The first Canada Council grant to the Ottawa Choral Society was for the 1959-1960 season, for \$1,500.00. It received \$1,500.00 in 1960-1961 season. A second source of income was from the municipality of Ottawa, which gave

Gerald Trotter, in the university's Tory Building. Trotter, one of Canada's foremost artists, created a large tessera mural "whose bold, abstract form and vividness of colour provoked extensive discourse amongst students and staff, unaccustomed as many were to art that pushed conventional boundaries."²²⁴ From 1962 to 1964, the Ottawa Philharmonic Society organized a series of concerts in Ottawa by the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, sponsored through Canada Council funds.²²⁵

Municipal cultural recreation programs continued, and in 1963, the Hillcrest Community Council established the Dauphin Players as a community theatre to serve the Elmdale Acres area. The Lindenlea Community Centre Ballet School was also established, and featured both ballet and modern jazz classes. In 1963, the Ottawa Technical High School Band competed in four European countries.²²⁶ In 1964 the Ottawa Grand Opera Company failed,²²⁷ but at the same time, Gerald Wheeler founded the Cantata Singers, Ottawa's first professional choral ensemble. In 1964, the Nepean Fine Arts League was established as the region's first non-profit, artists and artisans umbrella organization.

\$375.00 in 1961 (*By-Law* 164-61); \$400.00 in 1962 (*By-Law* 104-62); \$400.00 in 1963 (*By-Law* 103-63); \$400.00 in 1964 (*By-Law* 84-64); \$400.00 in 1965 (*By-Law* 94-65); \$400.00 in 1966 (*By-Law* 141-66); \$400.00 in 1967 (*By-Law* 92-67); \$500.00 in 1968 (*By-Law* 119-68). From Canada Council Annual Reports and City of Ottawa By-Law records.

²²⁴ Nan Griffiths, "An artist's journey: Gerald Trotter: 1925 – 2004," *Carleton University Magazine*, Fall 2004, p. 42.

²²⁵ The Ottawa Philharmonic Society received Canada Council funds of \$10,000.00 in 1962-1963 and \$7,000.00 in 1963-1964. From the Canada Council Annual Reports.

²²⁶ Personal letter from Lorna Hancock (Mrs. Orville W. Hancock) to Mr. & Mrs. Southam. Hancock was the sole representative of the Royal Conservatory of Music (RCM) in Ottawa. From PAC, MG 31 D230, Vol. 13, Hamilton Southam's papers. File: National Capital Arts Alliance. Sub-File: J.D. B. Harrison, Hon. Secretary Correspondence, 1963, #1 of 2.

²²⁷ "The Ottawa Grand Opera Company founder, H. Bramwell Bailey, began his musical career in Ottawa in 1923, when he and Cyril J. Rickwood founded the Temple Choir, a Masonic ensemble, which continued until the late 1950s. [...] In 1949, Bailey founded the Ottawa Grand Opera Co. and produced many opera productions at the Ottawa Technical High School auditorium, such as *The Bartered Bride*, *La Bohème*, *Carmen*, and others, until 1964 when the semi-professional company closed." From Southwarth, EMC 1005a.

The year 1965 was very busy for Ottawa's artists. In May of that year, Barbara Esner opened the commercial Wells Gallery, which provided the city (est. pop. 275,000)²²⁸ with its third commercial art gallery for exhibition of works (along with Robertson's Gallery and Wallack's Gallery).²²⁹ Faye Loeb, ever in the forefront of action in Ottawa's art scene, organized the Ottawa Collects Sculpture exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada, which featured sculpture collections drawn from private Ottawa collections.²³⁰ The Ottawa East Community Centre²³¹ founded *L'Atelier* and offered 35 French theatre courses for Ottawa's French-speaking population. The professional Classical Ballet Concert Group received Canada Council funds, and was acclaimed at the Four Ballet Festivals held in the northern U.S., where the dancers performed as guests, with other regional American companies.²³² The Ottawa Civic Symphony Orchestra formed under Col. Clifford Hunt's direction and received municipal funds from its inception.²³³ Shortly thereafter, this ensemble came under the direction of newcomer Brian Law, who created a Gentlemen and Boys' Choir at St. Matthew's Church in the Glebe, where he was organist and choirmaster. And in preparation for Centennial Year, the new Centennial Choir of the National Capital Area was organized under the direction of the Centennial Commission's Director of Music Nicholas Goldschmidt. In 1965,

²²⁸ Figures from Taylor, p. 210. The population in Ottawa in 1961 was 268,206; in 1971, 302,341.

²²⁹ The Federation of Canadian Municipalities' ideal that "every community of 50,000 persons should have a concert hall, art gallery, theatre, art school, ballet school, music conservatory, museum and library" was still sadly lacking in the capital. OCA, *Civic Recreation Record*, Vol. IV, No. 3, 15 March 1956.

²³⁰ Burant, III, p. 21.

²³¹ The Ottawa East Community Centre French theatre program began in 1958.

²³² According to the Canada Council Annual Report of 1965-1966, the troupe was also called the Ballet Imperial of Canada. They received a Canada Council grant of \$1,000.00 to perform in the Northeast Regional Ballet Festival in Washington, D.C.

²³³ The Ottawa Civic Symphony received \$1,000.00 each year from municipal funds, from 1966 until 1973. See OCA, *By-Laws*.

letters were sent to all the schools and religious institutions in the national capital region, inviting singers to audition, and rehearsals for the hundreds of amateur singers were held throughout 1966.²³⁴

Centennial Year appeared to be the dividing line between the old Canada and the new, and between what artists had accepted in the past and what they were willing to endure in the future. According to Bill Stevens, owner of Crawley Films, in 1967 Ottawa seemed to change overnight.

Prior to '67 the sidewalks rolled up and the buses stopped running at midnight, but after '67 people were driving around at 3 a.m. with the tops down in their cars. There was a huge about-face by Canadians expressing themselves in different ways, and I think 1967 was a turning point in terms of awareness of their identity.²³⁵

The federal government may have expected the local to rise up to, and fall in line with its expectations for Centennial Year, but during the 1960s, artistic identity in Ottawa embraced many different agendas. Many of the local arts organizations, such as the FPA, endeavoured to meet federal expectations, but were stymied because they lacked the financial means, physical space, and human resources. Conversely, many other arts organizations ignored the status quo and simply forged ahead.

In the midst of this setting was Crawley Films. Crawley's artistic identity was located somewhere between the local and the federal, and between art for institutional purposes, and art for art's sake. It mirrored the local-municipal and local-national tensions. Bill Stevens, owner of Crawley Films, remembered when

... there was great rivalry between the National Film Board (NFB) and Crawley's. When it was too complicated for a government department to handle they would

²³⁴ David LaFranchise (choir archivist and former CCC president), interview by author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 23 March 2004.

²³⁵ Bill Stevens (owner of Crawley Films), interview with author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 2 February 2004.

hire out, and the NFB tried to lure the best deals down to Montreal, so that if something had great creative potential they would try to take it out of Ottawa. Budge Crawley and Graham Fraser and other company executives fought very hard to keep work in Ottawa.

During Centennial Year, Crawley's was very involved with EXPO '67 in Montreal but much of the work was done in Ottawa because, as Stevens suggests, "in those days, there was a sense that if you came to Ottawa it was a great honour because it was the "National" place [...] and you knew that you were touching base with the best."²³⁶

For the whole of 1967, Ottawa was awash with Centennial events, some under the auspices of the Centennial Commission, and others shown as locally produced shows. To celebrate the New Year, the Centennial Choir of the National Capital Area, under the direction of Goldschmidt, performed a midnight show on Parliament Hill on 1 January 1967. The choir also provided music for Ottawa's 50th anniversary of Vimy Ridge in May 1967, and sang for Dominion Day celebrations on 1 July. The Centennial Commission bought the music, paid for the venues and transportation, and rented the choir gowns from the University of Ottawa.²³⁷ Other local artists performed for the Commission, including the Christ Church Cathedral Singers, who from 29 September until 3 October presented the musical Noah's Flood.

The federal government sponsored other special Centennial programs, which featured local artists. The National Gallery of Canada presented a two-man exhibition of Ottawa residents' Duncan de Kergommeaux and Georges de Niverville's works during Centennial Year, and federal commissions were awarded to Ottawa resident Victor

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ LaFranchise, interview.

Tolgyesy for sculptures in Ottawa, Stratford and Expo '67.²³⁸ And the CBC Studio Orchestra of Ottawa performed in the Gatineau Hills at Camp Fortune, delighting audiences all summer long (and for several summers after) with a full season of classical, jazz, folk and pop music.²³⁹

Carleton University supported Centennial Year by establishing Ottawa's first university music department, and by offering Canada's first course in Canadian music. Englishman John Churchill founded the program. Carleton music professor Elaine Keillor worked with Churchill and explained:

John was already coming to Canada as a music examiner for the Royal Schools. A group of Carleton professors approached him to set up a music school, because they felt that it was a necessary component for the university. John felt that a school set up in Ottawa, in Canada, should be different from what was in Britain. That was why he offered a Canadian music course – and that was the first in Canada – to be on the books.²⁴⁰

On the provincial education front, in 1966 the Ottawa Public School Board Director of Music John Sutherland conceived of creating a student history of Canada *tableau* in dance, drama and music, choreographed within the Ottawa Auditorium. For a year, Sutherland worked with over one thousand students and teachers, and the Central Choir conductor, Barbara Clark, recalled the final event.²⁴¹

In 1967, we told the history of Canada through dance and drama on the floor [of the Ottawa Auditorium], while a 1000-voice choir sang from the stands. We made red and white capes, which the choir wore, and I made a seating plan that would show the new Canadian Flag from 1965. I can remember being petrified at

²³⁸ Burant, p. 21.

²³⁹ The CBC Camp Fortune Summer Program began on 26 June 1967.

²⁴⁰ Elaine Keillor (Carleton University music professor), interview by author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 16 December 2003.

²⁴¹ For further information about this Ottawa Central Children's Choir 1967 concert, see: <http://collections.ic.gc.ca/choir/frames.htm>. Accessed 1 August 2004.

the rehearsal and when we actually turned the lights on and the flag was “suddenly” there, I nearly died. [...] It was a terrific show.

It was the last artistic performance at the Auditorium before it was torn down.

We [the arts teachers of the Ottawa Public School Board] have always been sorry that it’s gone because it was a perfect size for things like that. In later years we moved to the new Civic Centre but we had to use microphones because all those extra seats just swallowed up the sound. It was not good.²⁴²

Local entrepreneurs and non-profit organizations also presented Centennial fare.

In May 1967, art enthusiasts celebrated the tenth anniversary of the annual NCJWO Art Exhibition and Show at Lansdowne Park. Artists and patrons welcomed the opening of the commercial Lofthouse Gallery on McLeod Street in 1967.²⁴³ Two professional theatre troupes were also formed in the city that year. The new Ottawa Theatre Guild performed at the Eastern Ontario Institute of Technology, in its new 500 seat, air-conditioned theatre.²⁴⁴ In the Guild’s brochure, it announced with pride that it was not supported by government grants or corporate endowments. From an artistic viewpoint, the stance was related to the notion of freedom of expression, which meant that the Guild was free to produce plays that criticized the government, or to reveal corporate labour abuses, with the assumption that these groups would have no power over the artistic product if they were not financial supporters. From an economic standpoint, it meant that the Guild was organized on the marketplace ethic, and its survival depended on the “sale” of its plays to a commercial, customer base.

The other new theatre troupe was the Town Theatre, a drama company founded

²⁴² Clark, interview.

²⁴³ Duncan de Kergommeaux, “Memories of Art in Ottawa in the 50s and 60s” in Jim Burant, *History of Art and Artists of Ottawa and Surroundings, 1790 – 1970: Part III, 1946 – 1978* (Ottawa: Ottawa Art Gallery, 1995), pp. 28-29.

²⁴⁴ The Ontario Vocational Centre and The Eastern Ontario Institute of Technology (present day Rideau Campus) merged to create Algonquin College, which opened officially on 1 September 1967. This troupe’s performance brochure, found in the Ottawa Room of the Ottawa Public Library, was obviously published before the merger.

by the Theatre Foundation of Ottawa. The Town Theatre gave its first performance in November 1966 at La Salle Academy auditorium, the former home of the Stage Society and the Canadian Repertory Theatre, and in its first season “brought together some of the finest actors in Canada, presented a variety of plays from the modern international repertoire, and attracted over 3,000 local subscribers.”²⁴⁵ The Town Theatre aspired to be the resident theatre company of Ottawa’s new, national performing arts centre, scheduled to be opened in 1969.

While local arts amateurs and professionals, entrepreneurs, schools, churches and all levels of government prepared for the “cultural” Centennial Year, the Ottawa business sector, especially land developers, and the Ottawa Social Planning Council, were promoting their own agendas. First, in 1964, the “exploiters” who Mayor Whitton referred to when describing the hunt for a federal performing arts centre site, were actually private developers who in 1963 began to contract their land and buildings to the federal Department of Public Works (DPW). This federal and local business, ‘joint-policy’ marked a new direction in intergovernmental relationships “and by so doing caused conflict with both the National Capital Commission (NCC) and Ottawa City Hall.”²⁴⁶

In 1964, Ottawa City Hall established its own new urban planning policies, and focused their reform on the downtown area. The reasons were clear:

It was the summer of 1964. Downtown Sussex Drive was lined with dilapidated, old buildings, and a large, antiquated post office stood near the corner of Sussex and Daly. During the day, Rideau Street buzzed with traffic and people while the

²⁴⁵ James Noonan, “Town Theatre”, in Eugene Benson and L. W. Conolly, eds., *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Theatre* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 564. The Theatre Foundation offices were at 150 Metcalfe Street.

²⁴⁶ Caroline Andrew, “Ottawa-Hull” in Warren Magnusson and Andrew Sancton, eds. *City Politics in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), p. 149.

market area resounded with the squawking of livestock. Train tracks bordered the Rideau Canal, making their way to the train station opposite the Chateau Laurier. The most exciting thing about downtown Ottawa was the train leaving for Montreal.²⁴⁷

From this image, and out of the city's new zoning regulation policy,

... the city decided to do neighbourhood plans, and in all cases the planning process included participation by the citizens, who worked with city officials. The plans often went beyond traditional planning areas to include schemes related to a broad range of social needs identified through the [Ottawa Social Council] planning process.²⁴⁸

Culture, although not yet a sector with a defined presence in the city, was part of the larger social system that was being identified in its social planning process, and inclusion in these plans created an infrastructure for the arts sector's later politicization in the 1970s.

Conclusion

From the 1940s to the 1950s, commitments by the municipality to the amateur arts sector resulted in the provision of three arts facilities, an arts festival, an arts council, and a variety of short term, ad hoc cultural programs at community centres. The city lacked a plan for long-term civic arts development. Professional artists worked in the marketplace but few cultural enterprises remained viable because of the lack of affordable arts facilities (such as staged auditoriums) and because the sector had to cope with a federal arts production system that gave its offerings to the Ottawa audiences for free, while the local arts sector could not.

²⁴⁷ Pat Durr, "Ottawa: Some Personal Reflections" in Jim Burant, *History of Art and Artists of Ottawa and Surroundings, 1790 – 1970: Part III, 1946 – 1978* (Ottawa: Ottawa Art Gallery, 1995), p. 32.

²⁴⁸ Andrew, p. 151.

During the 1960s, hope for improved conditions for both the amateur and professional artists seemed to come initially from the Centennial Commission, which had millions of dollars to spend on projects, especially ones that promoted arts facilities. Provided with adequate facilities, the arts sector felt it could succeed in creating a better local product for self-promotion. The federally funded arts centre project was underway. Commitment was obtained from the Centennial Commission to include local artists in the capital city celebrations, and although these took the form of mostly short-term events, performed by thousands of volunteers and viewed by hundreds of thousands of audience members, they did strengthen the sector by providing performance opportunities. As well, a focus on youth resulted in the creation of new theatre, dance and music groups such as the Gentlemen and Boys' Choir, the Ottawa Youth Orchestra, and a new alternative culture group, called Le Hibou. Higher arts education at Carleton University and junior and high school programs in the region resulted in the provision of a life-cycle arts continuum in the city. By the mid-1960s, the addition of funding from the Ontario Arts Council and the Canada Council improved the possibilities for professional and amateur development.

Still, significant factors continued to limit the successes of the Ottawa arts community. Local organizations, such as the Festival of Performing Arts, closed due to competition from federally funded institutions. An emphasis on short-term programming undermined local prospects for Centennial Commission capital funding and provided only temporary solutions, while in other cities that very Commission funded scores of arts facilities, museums, galleries and libraries. In Ottawa, federal and municipal governments showed indifference to the local arts sector. In fact, through the

redevelopment work of the municipality at Brewer Park and Lansdowne Park, Centennial Year plans had the affect of both redirecting funds away from arts programming in the Recreation Department, and demolishing two of the city's most popular performing arts venues – results that were discouragingly counterproductive.

Chapter Four (1968 – 1973)

With Centennial Year over, disillusionment set in for many professional Ottawa artists. They had cherished hopes that with Centennial Commission funds, arts facilities would be built for the local sector in the form of galleries, theatres, or concert halls, similar to those that existed in other cities and arts sectors across Canada. There was a critical need for these resources as National Capital Arts Alliance founder Hamilton Southam suggested in 1963:

... the National Capital area was lagging behind other Canadian cities in the provision of facilities for the performing arts. At least ten cities had better facilities. No city of comparable size had worse. [...] Facilities in the National Capital area were inadequate for ballet, symphony, and opera while the facilities for drama and recitals were not truly suitable for performances of a professional calibre. This discouraged development of the performing arts.²⁴⁹

With the demolition of two of Ottawa's most popular performing arts facilities, and the lack of Centennial Commission funds to support any long-term advantage to Ottawa's art's sector, the arts scene in the capital had declined since before the Second World War, as the buildings previously available for arts performances in the 1930s no longer existed.

The period 1968 – 1973 was a time of contradictions. Many of Ottawa's cultural pioneers decided to leave the city because they felt their efforts at establishing a thriving arts community had been in vain. At the same time, the growing and maturing non-profit arts community of younger artists forged new alliances, aided by religious and educational institutions, the National Gallery of Canada, and the new National Arts Centre (NAC), which offered space and educational programming for culture. Private entrepreneurial efforts, assisted by new federal government programs for youth and the

²⁴⁹ PAC, Hamilton Southam Papers, MG 31, D 230, Vol. 15, File: A National Centre for the Performing Arts: A Study Prepared for the NCAA, (October 1963) p. 4.

unemployed, established a thriving counterculture. The lack of arts facilities remained a problem. The major change that occurred in the city, and which affected the ability of the municipality to enact its urban and social planning agendas (and within them, plans for the cultural community), was the creation of the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton (RMOC) on 1 January 1969. At the end of the period in 1973, increasing public interest in cultural activity prompted internal changes in the Department of Recreation and Parks, which, for the first time, announced a five-year plan for cultural recreation for the community. These events and activities added to the complexity of political-cultural relationships in the city.

In 1968, the poor state of Ottawa's cultural sector was noted not only locally but internationally, and touring professional ensembles from other countries were reluctant to present in the city.

In the capital of one of the world's richest nations, visiting attractions were usually forced to perform [...] at one of the local high schools or at the Capitol Theatre, a cinema that is said to sell excellent popcorn. When *l'Orchestre de Paris* came in 1968, ten musicians had to sit off-stage!²⁵⁰

Given the declining situation, a number of professionals planned to leave.²⁵¹ Visual artist

Duncan de Kergommeaux was one. He felt

... the end of Expo 67 seemed to signify the end of an era. My ideas about art were going through a major transition [...] and it was difficult to find work that excited me enough to want to subsidize its exhibition.

Subsidization of work was a large part of artists' lives; the general lack of physical infrastructure meant that if the works were to be seen at all, then the artist had to make a

²⁵⁰ Alexander Ross, "To an Ottawa Aristocrat Building You a Culture Palace: What's \$46 Million?" in *Maclean's* Magazine (Toronto, June 1969) p. 36.

²⁵¹ According to Jim Burant, "In 1970, Jim Boyd, Maurice Stubbs and Duncan de Kergommeaux [left] Ottawa to teach in London. By this time, the community had developed to the extent that even the loss of such artists did not cause a collapse on the local scene." From Burant, III, p. 20.

great effort to book commercial locales and publicize well in advance to develop an audience. For many it was still necessary to sustain artwork through reliance on government day jobs.

The disenchantment felt by de Kergommeaux and other pioneers came perhaps because they had pushed long and hard for change, with little visible success. He was now part of the older generation and disinclined to continue battling for a seemingly futile cause.

It was time for others with more resources to take over [because] art in Ottawa was finally, fully and irretrievably bureaucratized. There was little room left for the artists.²⁵²

The local sector was trying to establish itself in a professional space, and whereas in other Canadian cities, the arts sectors were doing this successfully, in Ottawa, the city appeared to be actively destroying venues and obstructing the process. This demoralized and discouraged the arts community.

So after almost two decades of pushing, prodding and pleading for contemporary art and artists in Ottawa, I left to teach at the University of Western Ontario.²⁵³

Perhaps the final push to leave came with the changing fortunes of the Ottawa Municipal Arts Centre (OMAC), at which de Kergommeaux was an occasional teacher.

The arts sector in Ottawa was at the mercy of a multiplicity of government bodies that were intent on their own agendas. With the addition of a new governance body for the region (the RMOC), the beleaguered arts sector had to justify its existence to yet another bureaucratic level of government. The RMOC embraced eleven rural, suburban

²⁵² de Kergommeaux, p. 30.

²⁵³ Ibid.

and urban municipalities²⁵⁴ and provided a central administration system to control common regional concerns such as sewage, water, some roads, public transportation, and social issues, which included the arts sector.²⁵⁵ With this, regional school boards developed a two-tier funding arrangement whereby the region and the Boards of Education came to some 85 per cent of the tax money raised locally, and the eleven municipal governments kept the remaining 15 per cent. Revenue in the form of conditional grants from the provincial to local governments also grew after World War Two, limiting even further financial autonomy at the local level.

In addition, the practice of tied funding spread after World War Two into the cultural and many other sectors, which often meant that grants from the province and federal government were tied to the amounts groups or individuals first received from local authorities or raised on their own, or both. In other words, the municipal grants to organizations or individuals shaped those of the upper levels of government. The poor, under this system, tended to stay poor. Regardless, commitments by the local authorities often were crucial to senior level funding for artists and organizations.

The City of Ottawa, as the governing body closest and most responsible for the local arts sector, did little to defend it against these other agendas. While this environment had not changed since the municipality first began to take an interest in civic culture, what was different now was the reaction of the general public, which recognized

²⁵⁴ The eleven municipalities of the RMOC were Ottawa, Vanier, Rockcliffe Park, Cumberland, Gloucester, Goulbourn, March, Nepean, Osgood, Rideau and West Carleton

²⁵⁵ The Ontario provincial government created the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton (RMOC) to counter the expanding NCC influence. As John Taylor suggests, the NCC's plans imposed themselves upon "the jurisdiction of the city and the regional governments [...] that now had their own regional and neighbourhood planning imperatives," and "the NCC showed a striking insensitivity to the new imperatives of both regional and, more important, neighbourhood planning." Taylor, p. 194.

that impotency and instituted its own form of public support. The following four examples illustrate this change.

In the late 1960s, the National Capital Commission (NCC) wanted the Billings Bridge land upon which the OMAC sat, and the municipality was faced with finding alternate accommodation for its civic art centre. In 1968 preparations began for its transfer and in January 1969, the OMAC moved west to the former Ottawa Humane Society building on Bayview Road at Scott Street, renovated at a cost of \$18,000.00 to the municipality.²⁵⁶ When the original OMAC was established at the southern edge of the city at Billings Bridge in 1953, the municipal choice at the time was to centralize all of the city's visual arts efforts into this two-room schoolhouse.²⁵⁷ As the programs grew in popularity, other community centres offered extension courses, but the materials and proper studio equipment such as kilns were at the OMAC, making decentralization unworkable. Demand for courses quickly outgrew the supply of space and art enthusiasts began lobbying the city for a larger, more comprehensive centre. It took fifteen years to pass before the move happened, and after much fumigation, the building, with five studios, was a marked improvement from the former two-room site. The press lauded the new facility, and in its commentary revealed that the broader public felt the same: there was a growing feeling that artistic culture should have both a recreational and a professional place in Ottawa. The OMAC, with its continued focus on art excellence, was, it felt, a worthwhile investment and a necessary component of Ottawa city life.

With increased facilities, it is to be expected that membership will expand even further as the centre moves away from its old "recreational" image and comes into

²⁵⁶ OCA, Ottawa Department of Recreation and Parks, Annual Report 1968, p. 33.

²⁵⁷ There was one room downstairs and one room upstairs. A total of about 50 students could be accommodated in the "class" rooms.

its own as a much needed source of instruction for serious students in the Ottawa area.²⁵⁸

A second problem involved professional visual artists, who “had to cope with the haunting problem of developing as local artists in a scene dominated by the National Gallery of Canada,” which, they charged, “did not consider the work of local artists.”²⁵⁹ Friction between the two levels culminated in a spot of civic disobedience in June 1969, when Duncan de Kergommeaux, Victor Tolgyesy, Jim Boyd, Gerald Trottier, Norm Takeuchi, Georges de Niverville and Art Price “loaded a large piece of Tolgyesy sculpture on a truck and transported it to Wellington Street across from the Parliament Buildings. We placed it on an empty sculpture plinth [...] and it stayed there for a few days until the police ordered it down.”²⁶⁰ They were determined to show the general public that another arts community had developed outside of the National Gallery.

A third group that was important to the life of the community, the long-standing and highly successful Ottawa Little Theatre (OLT), was threatened with possible disaster by external forces.²⁶¹ Begun in 1913, it occupied a building purchased entirely with capital raised from private subscriptions, between 1925 and 1928. The OLT survived and even thrived due to an astute knowledge of its patrons’ entertainment preferences and because of its property tax-free status in the city, in place since 1929.²⁶² On 1 July 1970, however, this good fortune disappeared when the building, with all its costumes, props, and records, burned to the ground. The public reacted immediately. Spurred by media

²⁵⁸ Jenny Bergin, “Municipal Arts Centre Moves” in *Ottawa Citizen*, 12 April 1969, p. 21.

²⁵⁹ Burant, *III*, p. 20.

²⁶⁰ Burant, *III*, pp. 20, 29.

²⁶¹ The Ottawa Little Theatre was known formerly as the Ottawa Drama League.

²⁶² OCA, Ottawa, *By-Law* 6658, (4 June 1929), Chapter 14.

coverage, private donations flowed in to help with the rebuilding. Both La Salle Academy (home to the earlier Stage Society and the Canadian Repertory Theatre) and Algonquin College offered their stages for use. Within seven months, architectural plans were ready to commence building a new theatre.²⁶³

The rebuilding permit was blocked by the new Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton (RMOC), which had earmarked the theatre's land for its regional road widening plans on King Edward Avenue.²⁶⁴ Public indignation in support of the theatre forced the regional council to negotiate a compromise with the OLT. This reduced the size of the expropriation²⁶⁵ but still altered the architect's design, increasing the OLT rebuilding costs dramatically.²⁶⁶ In nearly losing its building, it almost lost its 1929 tax exemption status as well. Transportation and land use issues were at the top of both the City of Ottawa and the RMOC's agendas, and it was only concerted and intense political lobbying that saved the OLT from the loss of its facility.

Another group that experienced problems and ultimately failed was the Town Theatre. In 1966, the company had formed as part of the Theatre Foundation of Ottawa's longstanding efforts to resurrect professional theatre in the capital. For Centennial Year, some of Canada's finest actors and actresses came to work in the city, and joined the

²⁶³ One of the possible reasons for the OLT's extraordinary ability to recover so quickly from its disaster is that it was part of a larger, national group of Little Theatres, all of which sustained each other in their pursuit of quality, amateur theatre. The OLT belonged to the Eastern Ontario Drama League, and it competed against other Leagues from other parts of the country in the Dominion Drama Festival (DDF). In May 1971, the DDF grand finale was held in Ottawa and hosted by the OLT. For this event, the municipality, under its "miscellaneous" category, provided its first-ever grant to the DDF, for \$5,000.00 (By-Law 144-71).

²⁶⁴ The Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton (RMOC) began operations on 1 January 1969. The RMOC embraced eleven rural, suburban and urban municipalities (Ottawa, Vanier, Rockcliffe Park, Cumberland, Gloucester, Goulbourn, March, Nepean, Osgood, Rideau and West Carleton) and provided a central administration system to control common regional concerns such as sewage, water, some roads, public transportation, and social issues, which included the arts sector.

²⁶⁵ The OLT land on the King Edward side was reduced by 8% (10-foot strip x 80 feet). From Winston, p. 65.

²⁶⁶ *Ottawa Citizen*, "Littler or Costlier Theatre is Question," 23 April 1971, quoted in Winston, pp. 64 – 65.

theatre with the hope that they would become the resident company of the soon-to-be-opened National Arts Centre. The Town Theatre began its initial 1966-1967 season at La Salle Academy and garnered accolades and thousands of subscribers from a public eager for professional repertory theatre. Following Centennial Year, the difficulties that the Stage Society and the Canadian Repertory Theatre had with La Salle Academy persisted, and the theatre moved house, playing in numerous locations, including at three local high schools. For the company, this meant that the audience had to find them each time, and they lacked stage space, dressing rooms, storage areas and sound and lighting equipment. These resources were acquired at market rates. The company requested grants from municipal, provincial and federal sources but received only \$6,000.00 from the Ontario Arts Council. With this, the Town Theatre Company broadened its activities.

In its 1968-1969 season it offered five plays and expanded its plans to include studio presentations of music, films, readings, plays and workshops, as well as puppet theatre, televised plays and an Ontario tour.

However, this activity was not enough, and

the company ran into financial difficulties in 1968 and liquidated its \$24,000.00 in assets because it thought it would not need its own theatre but rather become the National Arts Centre (NAC) resident theatre company.

The NAC had other plans and “neither this proposal nor an offer to become a summer-comedy troupe at the NAC was accepted by the centre” so the Town Theatre and Theatre Foundation of Ottawa ceased operations in 1969.²⁶⁷

These four examples -- first, the OMAC’s lack of a facility, the visual artists – National Gallery of Canada struggle for recognition, the OLT – regional government land battle, and the NAC’s refusal to accommodate the Town Theatre -- represented some of

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

the difficulties faced by the Ottawa arts sector. In every case, municipal support was grudgingly minimal, if it existed at all, but public support was very strong.²⁶⁸

Against this beleaguered local backdrop the \$46 million, state-of-the-art, National Arts Centre (NAC) opened on 31 May 1969. Billed as a site of excellence for the presentation of the best performing artists in the world, the NAC was the only multi-disciplinary, bilingual performing arts centre in North America. The facility boasted four performance halls, with the 2,326-seat Opera, 950-seat Theatre, 305-seat Studio, and the 90-seat Salon. It also contained bookstores and boutiques, resplendent lobbies, meeting rooms, and a first-class restaurant, and was home to the new 46-member National Arts Centre Orchestra (NACO), under Canadian director Mario Bernardi.²⁶⁹ *Le Théâtre du Capricorne* offered full theatre productions in French, while the English side maintained a rotating program, with the Stratford National Theatre Company presenting the winter season. There was a department for popular entertainment, and the Concert Society of Ottawa²⁷⁰ and Tremblay Concerts Inc.²⁷¹ managed its show contracts. The Youth Department offered in-house and touring workshops, and student concerts to build future audiences and ensure a cadre of future performers.

²⁶⁸ From 1968 until 1973 inclusive, municipal grants under the "miscellaneous" category were given to the Ottawa Choral Society received \$2,950.00; the Ottawa Civic Symphony received \$6,000.00; the Ottawa Music Festival received \$3,000.00; the Dominion Drama Festival received \$5,000.00, and Theatre Aquarius received \$1,000.00 in 1971. Theatre Aquarius disappeared in 1973. This totalled \$17,950.00 over a five-year period.

²⁶⁹ Maestro Bernardi left the London Sadlers Wells Opera for the position at the NAC.

²⁷⁰ The Concert Society of Ottawa (1969 – 1974) was formerly known as the Pro Musica Society (1962 – 1969) and the Morning Music Club (1892 – 1962). From Southworth, EMC 1004c.

²⁷¹ Tremblay Concerts Inc. was Ottawa's premier commercial concert agency, from 1921 until 1969, when the NAC opened. Tremblay's continued as impresario for the NAC until 1971. The company began in 1921 under impresario Antonio Tremblay's direction and from 1922 – 1941 Tremblay Concerts Inc. presented acts at the Glebe High School Auditorium. In 1942 Tremblay's moved to the Capitol Theatre. From 1969 – 1971 Tremblay's worked as an impresario with the NAC. From Elizabeth Baird, "Tremblay Concerts" in EMC 1313a.

For Ottawa citizens, accustomed to watching performers in second-rate conditions, the NAC offered something completely different, and to some, elitist. The years of non-investment in Ottawa's local cultural scene had not prepared the Ottawa public for the NAC. Alderman Whitton (who in 1964 as mayor of Ottawa had met with Prime Minister Pearson regarding the transfer of NAC land from the City to the federal government) did not receive a special invitation to the official opening, nor did other former mayors, controllers or aldermen. When asked what she thought about the NAC, she said "I didn't get a decent look at it Saturday so I am not saying what I think until I do, but I call it Fort Kulture."²⁷² Others were even more pointed in their disdain "If you consider the countless millions of our hard-earned dollars which are squandered into abortions [sic] like the NAC, la dee da, you just might be tempted to dial the friendly neighbourhood anarchist."²⁷³

These attitudinal barriers were a concern to NAC management and the federal government. Secretary of State Gérard Pelletier said:

In every large metropolitan city, one finds areas that are impervious to cultural activities – culture is synonymous with education and wealth – many identify the uses of theatres, concert halls, museums, art galleries and libraries with the middle class and conclude that culture has nothing to do with them. The problem of winning over this "non-audience" is not only financial. Above all, it is a question of ideas, of concept. If we are to democratize culture, without debasing standards of quality, we must not only open the doors to much larger numbers of people, we must also induce them to enter.²⁷⁴

Enticements to further this agenda included spending \$650,000.00 for the opening celebrations.

²⁷² Alixe Carter, *Ottawa Journal*, 2 June 1969, p. 21.

²⁷³ Andre F. Cote, Letter to the Editor, *The Saturday Citizen*, 12 April 1969.

²⁷⁴ Gérard Pelletier, "Federal Support for the Arts in Canada," *Cultural Affairs* 6, (New York, New York: Associated Councils of the Arts, 1969) p. 8.

On Saturday, 31 May 1969, some 40,000 people, including Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau, toured the facility and enjoyed courtesy performances from members of the National Band of the Canadian Armed Forces, the Canadian Centennial Choir,²⁷⁵ and twenty other local groups. The formal June opening lasted three days and featured gala-studded events in dance, drama and music from professional Canadian national and international performers. An additional 44,000 people attended these festivities.²⁷⁶

The National Capital Arts Alliance founder G. Hamilton Southam regarded the NAC as essential to the creation and preservation of arts excellence in Canada. When the price tag rose from the original \$9 million in 1963 to \$46.4 million in 1969, Southam observed “everybody talks price, price, price on this thing. Why doesn’t somebody talk value?” His position was that the intrinsic value of art was more important than cost efficiencies, and he held fast to this belief.²⁷⁷

The public differences over low versus high culture, and the ethic of the marketplace versus government support, as seen in Whitton and Southam’s comments, prompted *Maclean’s* magazine writer Alexander Ross to publicly announce, for possibly the first time in print, the unique cultural duality of the city. In his article “To an Ottawa Aristocrat Building You a Culture Palace: What’s \$46 Million?” he highlighted the problem, but offered no solution:

²⁷⁵ Several members who sang in the Centennial Year celebrations wanted to continue singing together and in August 1968, the group was incorporated as the not-for-profit Canadian Centennial Choir (CCC). It continued with Nicholas Goldschmidt as conductor. Local business interests applauded their determination to “keep going” after the federal initiative disbanded, and the Ottawa Transit Commission (OTC) carried the choir, now the largest in the region, to its first concerts in hospitals and other social service engagements for free. The CCC continues in 2004. From LaFranchise, interview.

²⁷⁶ National Arts Centre (NAC) archives, *NAC Annual Report 1969 – 1970*, pp. 3 – 4.

²⁷⁷ Ross, p. 36.

In any other Canadian city, the *metteur en scène* of such a production would have to be a cultural promoter: a born publicist, a dollars-and-sense man, a flatterer of brewers and their wives, a broker of talent and money, a Mavor Moore or a John Fisher. But this was Ottawa; the local Medici happened to be the federal government, not private industry, and something different was required....²⁷⁸

Recognition and acceptance of this unfair duality prompted Southam to integrate the local sector's needs with that of the federal NAC. Southam, whose family was legendary in its longtime patronage of Ottawa cultural ventures, knew intimately the difficulties under which the arts sector worked, and realized the NAC could assist in improving that scenario, not through providing performance space (which was too expensive for most local groups because of union arrangements) but through educational opportunities.²⁷⁹ The NAC Act therefore had three objectives: "to operate and maintain the Centre; to develop the performing arts in the National Capital Region; and to assist the Canada Council in the development of the performing arts elsewhere in Canada."²⁸⁰ The second objective provided the means to make this intervention possible.

From this point on, the NAC represented the marketplace. In the pre-1969 years, this marketplace experienced both competition and cooperation between the federal, professional artists and the local arts sector. Prior to the advent of the NAC, this situation was not desperate, as both federal and local artists performed in the same poor quality spaces, and the resident artists had the advantage and attention of local volunteers, media, and corporate patronage, of which the federal fare had no need.

However, the NAC changed those odds. It had an irresistible draw. Volunteers, corporations and the media deserted the local sector to become patrons of the NAC.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ The National Gallery of Canada used a similar approach to assist the local sector.

²⁸⁰ National Arts Centre Act, p. i.

Audiences were thrilled with the new facility, especially in comparison with what was available on the local community level, and they were willing to pay well for the NAC's luxuriously appointed seats and presentation halls.

Comparisons were inevitable. The local arts sector was still struggling with the desertion of audiences, volunteers, media coverage, and patronage, and government agendas dominating and displacing it. The hardest blow to the sector came with the demolition of Ottawa's last local performing arts venue in May 1970. According to architectural historian Hilary Russell, the Capitol Theatre (formerly on the corner of Queen and Bank Street) was a movie palace in the truest sense of the word: a "gigantic, extravagantly embellished theatre in which vaudeville and motion picture entertainment was presented."²⁸¹ Built in 1919-1920, the resplendent, 2528-seat Capitol Theatre was "the centre of the city's social and cultural life for half a century" and "the only big theatre in Ottawa with a stage [...] rented for performances by touring companies and for other special events."²⁸² However, once movie theatres opened in the suburbs and the NAC "deprived the Capitol of the rentals upon which it depended [...] the Capitol could no longer command large enough audiences for its movies, stage shows, orchestral and theatre entertainments."²⁸³ Rising taxes and maintenance costs also contributed to its demise. As Ottawa's only remaining large stage for local presentations and gatherings, when the Capitol closed in May 1970 "amid much public sorrowing"²⁸⁴ the local arts

²⁸¹ Hilary Russell, *All that Glitters: A Memorial to Ottawa's Capitol Theatre and its Predecessors* (Ottawa: National Historic Parks and Sites Branch, 1975), p. 7.

²⁸² Russell, p. 9.

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 91.

presenters of traditional repertoire were left with school gymnasiums and auditoriums from which to present works to a city of approximately 300,000 citizens.

But not all performances, nor all performance spaces, were from the traditional European canon of ballets, operas, and symphony orchestra concerts. A counterculture movement, centred in Ottawa at the coffeehouse *Le Hibou* (est. 1960), was growing. *Le Hibou* offered the NAC no competition as traditional cultural facilities were of no interest to the alternative artists. In the late 1950s and the 1960s, the area around Rideau Street, Sussex Street and the market area was filled with the stores, hotels and factories of another era. Counterculture artists' groups located there because the rents were affordable.²⁸⁵ *Le Hibou* began on Rideau Street, and in 1965 moved to an NCC-owned property at 521 Sussex Street.²⁸⁶ From 1965 – 1968 founder Denis Faulkner and business partner Harvey Glatt began bringing blues and folk acts in from the United States, as well as supporting the local artists. They were the first commercial dining establishment in Ottawa to do so.

In those days, there wasn't much of a club scene, and liquor laws were extremely strict – now you go to a bar and stand up and mix with people and watch entertainment – but then in Ontario, you had to sit down in a tavern, or restaurant, and the hours were very strict, to midnight or 10 o'clock. There were few restaurants and no entertainment policies.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁵ The area used to be the centre of commerce in the region, but the movement of people out of the city and the subsequent growth of suburbs outside of the core caused a decline in the downtown economy.

²⁸⁶ Beginning in 1963 the NCC expropriated a number of municipal buildings on Sussex Street, and renovated and cleaned their facades to present the Centennial Year public with "heritage" memories of Ottawa. The buildings, many of which were warehouses of the Confederation style, became empty as the local commercial tenants were forced out. For further information about NCC designated heritage buildings in the Capital Region, see: http://www.canadacapital.gc.ca/corporate/parks_heritage/heritage/heritage_building/heritage_building_e.asp#sussex. Accessed 26 June 2004.

²⁸⁷ Harvey Glatt (owner of *Le Hibou*, and founder and owner of *Treble Clef* record store, *Bass Clef* concert promotion agency, and *CHEZ 106* radio station), interview with author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 15 January 2004.

In the mid-1960s an American concert at Newport changed expectations altogether, and was a turning point in Ottawa's alternative culture scene. Glatt explained:

One of the points in time when things started to evolve and there was a major shift was when Bob Dylan in 1965 went electric at the Newport Folk Festival, and then Woodstock happened in 1969. I was managing artists because there was nobody doing that kind of thing in Ottawa and I brought them to Le Hibou coffee house because the bars had no entertainment policies.²⁸⁸

At the same time (1969 – 1970), the concept of cooperative rather than profit-making commercial ventures came into vogue, and Pierre-Paul Lafrenière started the Ottawa Artists' Free Gallery in the basement of the *Le Chateau* store on Rideau Street.

I worked as an employee of Le Chateau and had artist friends. There was no place for them except in the few commercial galleries,²⁸⁹ and the basement of Le Chateau was empty, so the store let me set up a little gallery, as long as it didn't interfere with my work. And the Artist Free Gallery lasted for a year and a half on a cost-recovery basis, and was a community effort rather than a commercial business.²⁹⁰

In 1972 Lafrenière became Le Hibou's new owner. He started the Bytown Live Entertainment Association and actively supported the efforts of local and visiting musicians and other performers by providing them with a stage area in the coffeehouse.

At Le Hibou, it was very much a situation of professionals developing their talent and deciding they needed a place to mount plays, do poetry readings, have art showings, and perform music. It was diverse programming, from a children's theatre show on Saturday mornings by puppeteer Noreen Young,²⁹¹ to poetry readings by Leonard Cohen and Irving Layton, to music by Bruce Cockburn and locals who began their careers here.²⁹²

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Another small, alternative artists' space was The Third Floor Arts Students' Association, at 72 Rideau Street. This group provided an alternate venue for fine arts courses, which included dancing, music and photography, as well as "underground films, dramas and poetry readings". It was funded partly by the federal Manpower (employment) program. From Jenny Bergin, "Municipal Arts Centre Moves" in *Ottawa Citizen*, 12 April 1969, p. 21.

²⁹⁰ Lafrenière, interview.

²⁹¹ Noreen Young later received the *Order of Canada* in 1995 for her contributions to children's television.

²⁹² "Some musicians who performed there were Judy Collins, Joni Mitchell, Gordon Lightfoot, Ian Tamblyn and Sylvia Tyson, David Wiffen, and Kris Kristofferson. Locals included Cathy Miller, Sandy Crawley, Neville Wells and Bruce Cockburn." From Lafrenière, interview.

A few doors down on Sussex, another artists' group was taking advantage of the cheap NCC space that was available. They were called Coon Hollow Studios, and were part of an ad hoc group of painters called the Almost Underground movement that was focused around the market and Le Hibou. According to Coon Hollow Studios co-founders Arthur Conlon and John Garner,

We had a second floor warehouse property, totally empty, with 1500 sq. feet, for \$40.00 / month. Le Hibou was a place where you would meet other painters and poets and musicians – people talking philosophy – and we set up nearby. There were four of us²⁹³ – two painters and two photographers – and we cleaned the place, painted a portion, made a darkroom, hung paintings and people came.²⁹⁴

Unfortunately, one night in March 1973, the building burned down and everything was lost. Lafrenière offered them the second floor of Le Hibou, which had recently been vacated by the street theatre company. The new space was called Sussex Annex Works, or SAW Gallery. The federal Opportunities for Youth (OFY) program provided the means by which these artists could restart their studio, and sustain themselves while creating new work.²⁹⁵

In those days, people weren't really looking to the government for help, but we heard about the OFY grants and we applied. We made \$90.00 per week and we had that for the three months of the grant. In our application, the fact that there was no art support at the municipal level was the reason that we got our grant – specifically, here's the National Gallery of Canada, the NAC, and there's no local grassroots artists in Ottawa. At that time we were aware of the Western Front Gallery in Victoria or Vancouver, the Shoestring Gallery in Saskatoon, and

²⁹³ "The founders of Coon Hollow Studios were Peter Lamb, John Garner, Arthur Conlon and Alex Jones." From Arthur Conlon and John Garner (co-founders of Coon Hollow Studios, SAW Gallery), co-interview with author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 21 January 2004.

²⁹⁴ Conlon and Garner, interview.

²⁹⁵ Secretary of State Gérard Pelletier argued for the broader use of cultural activity as tools of unification and empowerment, through democratization, decentralization, pluralism, federal-provincial co-operation, and international co-operation. He announced the Opportunities for Youth (OFY) grants on 12 September 1970, at the Canadian Conference of the Arts (CCA) First National Forum on Cultural Policy in Toronto.

another one in Montreal, and those were the only alternative, run-by-artists galleries in Canada.

But the OFY offered only summer-based employment. In 1971, the government initiated the LIP grants, the Local Initiatives Program, and SAW availed itself of that, in order to keep the gallery going.²⁹⁶

The next year we applied for LIP grants for unemployed workers, and this allowed us to continue for an entire year. We provided a space for artists to hang, and we provided printing press services to community groups, not-for-profits, and offered photography, posters, graphics, layout, designing, silk screening, books, invitations – all for cost.²⁹⁷

SAW Gallery was Ottawa's first not-for-profit gallery space run by artists and with Le Hibou, offered Ottawa artists an alternative venue and opportunities for performance and exhibition. The focus was on arts promotion, rather than on business.

Le Hibou and SAW were the only established places in which local performers could work in the city. Production, performance and exhibition space for other repertoire forms were still urgently needed. The NAC had an embarrassment of riches in contrast to the impoverished local arts scene. Two distinct pathways had emerged for the development of the arts in the city - one through the resident groups on the local level, and one through the NAC programs for the community.

For the latter, the arrival of a cadre of professional artists at the NAC provided a more extensive professional arts education for youth in Ottawa. The city had a long

²⁹⁶ The Local Initiatives Program (1971 – 1977) began in November 1971. "It had a two fold objective: (i) to create additional jobs during winter months from November to May of the following year; (ii) to invoke the participation and involvement of community groups and the unemployed to provide services that would benefit the whole community. Projects were to provide at least 15 months of employment and a substantial part of it was to be additional employment over and above what would normally take place. Projects were to be of a non-profit nature. Project organizers were to use Canada Manpower Centres to hire unemployed workers. LIP was replaced in 1978 by a very similar program, called Canada Works." For further information about Human Resources Development Canada programs, see: http://www11.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/pls/edd/DJC_118007.htm. Accessed 1 July 2004.

²⁹⁷ Conlon and Garner, interview.

history of private teachers in all disciplines, but few institutional programs. The arrival of the NAC Orchestra (NACO) musicians in 1969 was the final push to establish a conservatory-type music department at the University of Ottawa. Some NACO members became professors. The university's theatre program also increased its offerings, complemented by NAC dramatists. The NAC Youth Department, in association with *Le Théâtre du Capricorne* and the National Stratford Theatre Company, began in-house and visiting theatre programs in elementary, junior and high schools. These efforts influenced thousands of students in the National Capital region to consider careers in the arts; in fact, they were the first generation in Canada that had the opportunity to do so. Ottawa became known as a professional training ground, largely because of the institutionalized NAC presence.

In its second season (1970 – 1971), the NAC Youth Division established and completely subsidized a unique pre-professional program for auditioned high school students.²⁹⁸ According to Ottawa actress/director and former high school drama teacher Eleanor Crowder:

The NAC trained them in August and then toured them in the region's primary, junior and senior schools in September. They toured two or three days a week for a month, and there was a lot of teacher aggravation because the actors would be away from their classrooms, and then the shows would also disrupt the classrooms.

Despite the classroom distractions, for students desperately wanting to be working in the field of theatre, it was the opportunity of a lifetime.

There developed a pool of people who in high school could identify themselves as working in theatre, and they knew that this was what they wanted to do as a

²⁹⁸ NAC Archives, Annual Report of the National Arts Centre, 1970 – 1971, p. 2.

career. They had the experience (over several seasons) that could back up that dream.²⁹⁹

In its third season (1971 – 1972), the Student Young companies increased their efforts, and now had a ten-week summer training program with a professional director and a two-week September touring program for 24 young French- and English-speaking actors.³⁰⁰ The NAC also hosted Youth August 1971, which featured the National Youth Orchestra (NYO) and the Ontario Youth Theatre Company; their presentations supported in part by the Ontario Department of Education.³⁰¹ On a broader level, in July 1971 the NAC presented Festival Canada, which introduced local audiences to Canada's best performers in music, opera, dance and theatre, as well as chamber ensembles and variety shows from around the world. Importantly, it provided a major boost to the emerging cultural tourism industry.³⁰²

On the local level, training and performances happened where they could. One of these was the Jewish Community Centre (JCC) Symphony Orchestra (1969 – 1976), with Armand Weisbord as conductor, and his wife Margaret Wilson, as concertmaster.³⁰³ The JCC Symphony Orchestra rehearsed at the JCC on Chapel Street at Rideau, and orchestra membership was open to any faith. Other efforts were made to assist the transition from

²⁹⁹ Eleanor Crowder (Ottawa-based professional actor, producer, dramaturge, former high school drama teacher), interview with author, tape recording, 9 February 2004.

³⁰⁰ NAC Archives, Annual Report of the National Arts Centre, 1971-1972, p. 13.

³⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 15 – 16.

³⁰² The Tulip Festival was a spring event, and summer was usually a low season for cultural activity. The Lakeside Festival of the Arts (1958 - ?) was no longer operating as a civic-sponsored, summer event.

³⁰³ Belgian-born Armand (born 1910) came to Canada in 1932 and began to work as a soloist in the Chateau Laurier Dining Room in 1936. He also worked for the CBC and other radio stations, as did Canadian-born Margaret (née Wilson, born 1913), who led a trio at Government House and at the Chateau. They both had distinguished careers as solo and duo performers with Crawley Films, the National Film Board, the Ottawa Philharmonic Orchestra, and many other music organizations. According to Armand, when the RCMP Band musicians heard about the JCC Orchestra they asked to join because they were very tired of only playing marches when they were trained to do so much more. Interview with author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 11 May 2004.

amateur to professional by creating an open, collaborative environment; the RCMP Band resided in Ottawa during its “low season” and gave winter concerts at the NAC,³⁰⁴ and it also offered expertise *pro bono* to not-for-profit organizations such as the JCC orchestra.³⁰⁵ Military music had long been an established tradition in the city, and another community endeavour was the Ottawa Community Concert Band, established in 1970 by retired military band members, and open to anyone with an interest in band repertoire. School boards and other educational institutions also helped in this transition. In 1971, the University of Ottawa Fine Arts program was inaugurated and grew quickly.³⁰⁶ The Ottawa Dance Centre Schools offered classical ballet and contemporary dance instruction.³⁰⁷ *Théâtre des Lutins* established a French touring theatre for children, and worked in several genres including Canadian plays, which were a rarity at that time. Also in 1971, through the efforts of Greg Conway, the Ottawa Roman Catholic Board created an Artist in Residence Program, and in return for use of empty space as studio facilities, artists provided services for students and staff. No rent or any other expenses were charged to the artists for space, but they were not remunerated for their services.³⁰⁸

As a result of increased public interest, by the end of this period (1973) the cultural recreation workers decided to “develop a five-year forecast for the progress of cultural growth” in the city.³⁰⁹ This was a unique development, organized because the

³⁰⁴ Kallman et al., “Bands”, EMC 81c.

³⁰⁵ Wiesbord interview.

³⁰⁶ Burant, III, 21.

³⁰⁷ For further information about the Ottawa Dance Centre Schools, see: <http://www.odcs.ca/>. Accessed 6 May 2004.

³⁰⁸ G.N. Conway was Co-ordinator of the English Language Curriculum Department, Ottawa Roman Catholic School Board. From OCA, Mayor Marion Dewar Papers, RG 7-11-2 C26/1a, file: Arts and Cultural Background Information File #1.

³⁰⁹ OCA, Ottawa Recreation and Parks Annual Report 1973: Cultural Activities, p. 20.

city's cultural consultant Anne Beaton perceived "the OMAC and similar cultural organizations" had "crisis-ridden futures."³¹⁰ Beaton wanted to alleviate that, and the forecast was

... stimulated by the need for a deeper understanding by others in the community, especially those in the ultimate decision-making positions, of the importance of encouraging and assisting the community cultural programs such as the OMAC, with better facilities, equipment and an increase in staff responsible for them.³¹¹

With this warning in place, the 1973 Annual Cultural Report observed positive changes as well. "Many milestones were reached in the furtherance of cultural recreation for Ottawa" and "new and innovative activities were offered to an increasingly aware populace [...] with programs such as Workshops in Clay, Creative Dramatics, Art in the Park, and Exploration Art."³¹² The Westboro Pottery Studio now had two new potters wheels and a studio-size kiln, purchased by the city for the highly successful clay program (est. March 1972). Exploration Art (est. April 1973) was the result of a new partnership with the National Gallery of Canada, which focused on mentoring programs for artistic children 8 – 12 years old. Algonquin College began Textile Arts '73 as a joint programming venture with the city and the French Canadian Women's Federation of Ottawa. The course offered French and English programs in macramé, frame-loomed weaving, creative stitchery, and Batik.³¹³

The half decade transition period (1968 – 1973) began as it had started: despite large and small federal and local successes, there remained bouts of pessimism because

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ Ibid.

the “euphoria of 1967 was being replaced by austerity.”³¹⁴ The attitude of the day was summed up by one NAC manager who wondered, “... if it was possible to impose music, ballet and theatre on a city by means of a building, least of all on a city like Ottawa, a capital never yet distinguished by any marked affection for matters cultural?”³¹⁵

³¹⁴ The following season (1972 – 1973), the Ottawa Board of Education (OBE) and the Outaouais Regional Board of Education worked with the NAC and recommended students to the NAC Young Theatre program, reduced dramatically to a single-week preparation in August and a two-week touring schedule.

³¹⁵ NAC Archives, Annual Report of the National Arts Centre 1971–1972, p. 6.

Chapter Five (1974 – 1978)

To judge the Ottawa cultural situation by municipal, provincial and federal governments' responses only would certainly lead to the belief that there was no great love for the arts in Ottawa. On the federal level, capital, operating and project funding was inadequate. The National Gallery of Art was housed inappropriately in an office tower and the vast majority of its collection was boxed in warehouses and unavailable for public viewing. The National Library opened in 1967 (and shared its space with the Public Archives of Canada) and the National Arts Centre opened in 1969, but while their facilities were state-of-the-art, they struggled with operating and programming deficits.

On the municipal level, the civic department responsible for culture starved the Ottawa public of arts by offering only a handful of small facilities for production and performance -- one 125-year old farmhouse for theatre (Ottawa Municipal Drama Centre), one two-room schoolhouse for visual art (Ottawa Municipal Art Centre), one community centre for dance (Lindenlea Municipal Ballet School), one centre for French amateur theatre (Ottawa East), and one centre for pottery (Westboro) -- for a city of approximately 300,000. Beyond the in-house program, there was one miscellaneous category for all external civic cultural funds. Municipal arts funding began in 1946 and although there were hundreds of community arts groups residing in the city, until 1973 only seven of them received funds, and two of these only once.³¹⁶ Because the provincial and federal funding programs were calculated on a percentage of the municipal grants given, Ontario Arts Council and Canada Council interest in the local sector paralleled the

³¹⁶ From 1946 to 1973, recipients were the Ottawa Philharmonic Orchestra (\$15,000.00, from 1946 to 1960), the Ottawa Choral Society (\$5,350.00 from 1962 – 1973), the Ottawa Civic Symphony (\$6,000.00 from 1967 – 1973), the Ottawa Music Festival (\$3,000.00 from 1968 – 1973), the Dominion Drama Festival (\$5,000.00 in 1971), and Theatre Aquarius (\$1,000.00 in 1971). Information from the City of Ottawa By-Laws, 1946 – 1973.

meagre municipal support. The assumption that all government levels in Ottawa had no love for the arts in Ottawa was correct.

When you put political support aside, however, a different picture emerged of a strong and abiding public affection for culture. Opinions recorded in the city's newspapers (the *Ottawa Citizen*, *Journal*, and *Revue*), the university newspapers, on television and local radio stations (including the CBC), disagreed with the governments' viewpoints. Perhaps it was because public opinion was not quantifiable that it was neither measured nor taken under advisement.

In response to these contradictory views of the importance of art, four trends emerged during the latter half of the 1970s. The resolution of the conflict between the governments' and the public's views of culture in Ottawa was the theme throughout. This was reflected in the continuing fight for local arts facilities, in the fight against negative government incursions, the arts sector's resultant political and artistic maturation, and in the municipal and regional governments' dawning acceptance of responsibility for the sector.

Historically, pursuit of the artists' craft in the capital was not always difficult as the public was supportive, especially in the provision of facilities where arts activities could be held. For decades, buildings, although not quite acceptable, were nonetheless available to the sector. In the 1960s, the destruction of the best of these for arts presentations, coupled with an increase in arts professionalism and the need for proper arts facilities to match that improvement, caused the situation in Ottawa to become critical. A brief historical overview of arts facilities will reveal the variety that had earlier met those needs.

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From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, Ottawa citizens erected a series of buildings that served as staged concert and theatre houses. Local entrepreneurs built commercial entertainment venues to suit public tastes in everything from garrison theatricals in the nineteenth century to opera in the twentieth. Private buildings built by religious and educational institutions, with pulpits or auditoriums, served as stages for moral and intellectual purposes; finally, public all-purpose buildings such as hotel ballrooms, hockey arenas, and agricultural facilities were used as presentation halls when all else failed.

Available commercial entertainment establishments included dance halls and music halls, opera houses and theatres. Several graced the city streets in earlier days: the West Ward Market Building (1849 – 1877); Her Majesty's Theatre (1856-1871); Gowan's Dance Hall (1869); the Rink Music Hall (1870 – 1873); Gowan's Opera House (1873 – 1875); Gowan's New Opera House (1875 – 1877); *L'Institut canadien français* (1876 -); Gowan's Grand Opera House (1877 – 1913); the Russell Theatre (1897 – 1901); Orme's Concert Hall (1900 – 1901); and the New Russell Theatre (1901 – 1928). Most of these theatres burned down and one, the resplendent 1,773-seat New Russell Theatre (Ottawa's premier concert hall), was torn down by the federal government in August 1928 to make way for a central national space called Confederation Square and Park (now the National War Memorial area).

Private buildings also welcomed artists. Ballrooms and barns alternated as sites, according to the numbers and the clientele, and the hockey arena served as stage, with boards laid down on the ice and potted palms brought in for ambience. Educational institutions built entrances to their auditoriums with doors to the street for easy public

access in such places as Tabaret Hall at *La Collège de Bytown* (now University of Ottawa, built 1848), *L'Académie-de-la-Salle* (built 1899), the Ottawa Technical High School on Albert Street (built 1917), or the Elgin Street Public School (built 1890; 1957). Churches as performance centres came into vogue in the 1970s as religious attendance was in decline and performing needs were growing. Earlier societal strictures forbidding entrance to another faith's building had relaxed, but repertoire remained constrained by the surroundings.

Twentieth-century burlesque and vaudeville houses leased out their premises to local and visiting performers. These halls were often ornately decorated, and boasted chandeliered domes, marble staircases, velvet seats, boxes and balconies, and elegant proscenium arches over the stages. They frequently had high quality organs or pianos, as well as orchestra pits (presumably to play when movies were silent) and were available to rent for a variety of community activities.³¹⁷ Preferred venues were the Imperial, built in 1914 and now Barrymore's Club on Bank Street, and the luxurious Capitol Theatre. Over the years, with changes in audience tastes and migration to the suburbs, many of the theatres closed and were replaced by other buildings or parking lots. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Capitol was Ottawa's last big stage theatre, and when demolished in May 1970 (largely because of loss of clientele to the NAC), the community was deprived of its last large stage for local events. According to architectural historian Hilary Russell, the Famous Players Canadian corporation,

... made a moral commitment to maintain it until an adequate theatre for stage performances was built in the city. Then the Capitol was deprived of the rentals, which had constituted a regular part of its revenue and was demolished.³¹⁸

³¹⁷ Russell, p. 95.

³¹⁸ *Ottawa Journal*, 7 January 1971, p. 9, quoted in Russell, p. 90.

In the last two cases, for the Russell Theatre and the Capitol, federal interventions played a key role in their destruction.

As a result of the lack of permanent performance venues, artists and exhibitors were required to change locations often. In order to purchase space and time in commercial or other facilities, they had to schedule their performances around church services, school requirements, movie showings, hockey games, or farm shows. For theatre troupes especially, the lack of permanent performance settings was destructive. Up to four different sites for storage, rehearsal, performance and administrative purposes were often required. Visual artists had similar difficulties finding properly lit production and exhibition spaces. For each performance, the audiences had to find them at their new venue. Ottawa's lack of public facilities, coupled with the need for non-market funding (grants), greatly diminished the local arts sector's ability to establish a distinct presence in the city.

In addition to the facilities problem, the first major economic threat to the local arts sector began in 1974, when a reduction in audience income and in Parliamentary appropriation prompted the National Arts Centre (NAC) to request funding assistance from both the municipality and the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton (RMOC). Information about these requests and disbursements was not made public.³¹⁹ As

³¹⁹ Initially, the decision was in camera. It appears astounding that a federal institution could ask for and receive funds from the regional and municipal governments. One reason that could account for this was the factor of board representation. When the NAC Act was written in 1966, the NAC's Board of Trustees "was appointed from the ex-officio members of the Director of the Canada Council, the President of the CBC, and the Chairman of the NFB." As a gesture of courtesy, ex-officio members were also the mayors of Ottawa and Hull, and the Chairman of the RMOC. As such, the latter three gained a thorough understanding of the difficulties under which the NAC operated, and could sympathize (and be co-opted). Municipal officials were not usually on the boards of local arts organizations, for fear of conflict-of-interest accusations, and yet this did not appear to matter in the case of the NAC. Quotation from Schafer and Fortier, p. 26.

justification, the NAC quoted the work it had done to develop the community's art sector, and requested and received \$100,000.00 from the municipality³²⁰ and \$139,000.00 under Section 127 of the RMOC Act.³²¹ These were the municipality's and the RMOC's first cultural grants to the NAC. In its 1973 – 1974 Annual Report the NAC acknowledged the assistance from the RMOC but not from the municipality, and stated its intentions to apply for further aid: "for the first time funds have been provided by a municipal grant that totalled \$139,000.00 and steps have been undertaken to seek increased financial participation...."³²²

In 1975, according to the NAC Annual Report "inflation has had a serious affect [...] it is necessary to practise economies [...] because of higher production costs, larger increases in heating, higher administration costs, etc." and for these reasons it requested continued sponsorship from the municipality and the region.³²³ The Ottawa municipality declined but the RMOC continued, with \$100,000.00 both that year and in 1976, followed by \$165,000.00 in 1977 and \$127,375 in 1978.³²⁴

³²⁰ The other groups that received funds during 1974 were the Ottawa Choral Society (\$500.00), the Ottawa Civic Symphony (\$1,300.00), the Ottawa Board of Education Central Choir (\$1,000.00) and the Ottawa Music Festival (\$500.00). From OCA, Ottawa, *By-Law* 18-74.

³²¹ In 1970, due to increased political pressure through citizen demands for the RMOC to address social and cultural issues as well, the RMOC initiated Section 127 of the RMOC Act. It stipulated that Regional Council could "make annual grants, to institutions, associations and persons carrying on or engaged in works that in the opinion of Regional Council are for the general advantage of the inhabitants of the Regional Area and for which grant or grants there is no express authority provided by any other Act." Section 127 became the political funding mechanism through which community-based social welfare activities, neighbourhood planning associations, and arts and heritage groups cultural groups received operating and projects grants. Assistance was to be given in response to successful applications, on an annual basis. The decision was in camera, and required only the RMOC Executive to approve it. From Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton Act, R.S.O. 1970, Chapter 407, Section 127.

³²² NAC, *Annual Report* 1973 – 1974, p. 75

³²³ NAC, *Annual Report* 1975 – 1976, p. 9. The NAC received \$6,892,000.00 from Parliament, plus \$100,000.00 from the RMOC.

³²⁴ NAC, *Annual Reports* 1975 - 1978.

It was not until 1976 that the public became aware of these disbursements from the municipal institution to its federal counterpart and it was during the 1976 RMOC budget review process that new RMOC Executive Council members questioned the need for the federal NAC to receive local RMOC funds. They also questioned the hidden nature of the disbursements, and it was discovered that grants under Section 127 of the RMOC Act required no “external approval (except by that of the Executive Committee).”³²⁵ In other words, individual RMOC grants could be approved without direct council scrutiny. At this time, the RMOC Finance Commissioner was charged to “submit period reports for the information of Executive Committee and Council setting out the disposition of these funds.”³²⁶ This extended the approval process to include Council oversight, and while it was not done by peer evaluation, it was more efficient and transparent. With pressure from Councillors Marion Dewar, Rolf Hassenack and others, the RMOC Council agreed in principle that local cultural sector applicants could also receive grants from this fund; the grants were not only for the NAC.³²⁷

Perhaps the theory at the time was that it was best to fund local arts groups indirectly through the NAC. In any case, the RMOC grants were for project or operating grants to approved groups, but money for capital applications (buildings), and applications from groups whose representation was not regional, were the responsibility of the second tier of municipal government. To that end, Ottawa City Council approved a new policy for cultural intervention, stating what it would not do rather than what it

³²⁵ OCA, RMOC, *Minutes*, title: “Regional Grants: Authority to Pay,” 28 May 1976, p. 1596.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1597.

³²⁷ OCA, RMOC, *Minutes*, title: “1978 Cultural Services: Grant Applications,” 12 July 1978, p. 2541.

would do: "Grants shall not be provided for a service which is rightly regarded as regional, provincial or a federal responsibility."³²⁸

According to Great Canadian Theatre Company (GCTC) playwright and actor Arthur Milner, after this RMOC motion in 1976, Dewar and other socially minded councillors held meetings with various arts groups, and suggested that organized political advocacy would advance greatly their cause.³²⁹ With this encouragement, in 1977 a group of ten arts organizations began to meet to discuss their common problems and in January 1978 formed the Ottawa-Carleton Arts Coalition (OCAC).³³⁰ Milner was President and Karen Weiss from Le Groupe de la Place Royale, was Chair. In February 1978, the OCAC established its Terms of Reference: to increase public awareness of and participation in the visual and performing arts in the regional municipality of Ottawa-Carleton; to encourage coordination, cooperation, and communication in cultural activities in the Ottawa-Carleton Region; to assist the local arts groups in their development; and to serve as a cultural liaison at the regional, provincial and national levels.³³¹ In essence, these terms were aimed at improving public relations on both the political and social levels of the city.

In July 1978, an RMOC motion was put forward that the NAC receive an additional \$50,000.00 (above the \$127,375 already provided in 1978). RMOC

³²⁸ OCA, Ottawa, *Bylaw 186-76*, p. 918.

³²⁹ Arthur Milner, (GCTC playwright, actor, producer), interview with author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 14 June 2004.

³³⁰ The groups were the Great Canadian Theatre Company, Le Groupe de la Place Royale, the Ottawa Choral Society, the Ottawa Dance Theatre, the Portable Theatre, SAW Gallery Inc., the Penguin Performance Company, the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra, Thirteen Strings, and *L'Association des enseignants franco-ontariens*. From RMOC, *Minutes*, 27 September 1978, pp. 3744 - 3745.

³³¹ OCA, RG7-11-8, OCA, Mayor Marion Dewar Papers.

Councillors Dewar and Hassenack countered the motion, and proposed the increase be divided up among local arts groups, such as those represented by the OCAC. With private representations made after the OCAC and to when this motion was put forth, artists made concerted forays into political lobbying of regional councillors. As a result, Regional Council agreed and approved Motion 88, which “placed \$50,000.00 in the Provision for Unforeseen for [...] grants in cultural services.”³³² This was the OCAC’s first political victory and a major victory for the sector on the whole.

Concerned that this would be a one-time triumph, Dewar and Hassenack pressed for future provisions, and during that same meeting the RMOC agreed to establish a special review committee “to evaluate comparatively all requests for cultural service grants and to recommend the distribution of funds available.”³³³ The committee was organized and the following month (August 1978), it assessed all applications. The reviewers looked for evidence of broad community support; efforts to obtain contributions from other public sectors such as the Canada Council and the Ontario Arts Council and the private sector; evidence of box office success; and balanced support from federal, provincial and municipal sources. In the latter category, municipal support had to be between six and ten per cent of the operating budget of the arts organizations, but with the municipality’s minimal or non-intervention agenda, achieving this aspect of the assessment criteria was difficult.

In 1978, the idea of funding local arts groups was novel for the RMOC, and the process was under negotiation as to whether it would continue. Nonetheless, for the resident arts organizations, the advantages were tenable and they forged ahead. Milner

³³² OCA, RMOC, *Minutes*, 12 July 1978, p. 2541.

³³³ OCA, RMOC, *Minutes*, 27 September 1978, p. 3743.

and Weiss wrote to the RMOC Council and offered a guide to the situation, from the artists' viewpoints.

City and Regional Council's support for local arts has been dismal. Ottawa City Council has no specific allocation for the arts and in 1976 the NAC received \$100,000.00 versus City of Ottawa groups \$4,740.00; in 1977 the NAC received \$165,000.00 versus City of Ottawa groups \$8,890.00, and in 1978 the NAC received \$127,375.00 versus City of Ottawa groups, \$7,428.00. [...] The 1978 regional grants [were] \$177,375.00; [...] however \$127,375.00 of this went to the NAC, leaving only \$50,000.00 for local arts groups.³³⁴

In the same letter, Milner also referred to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) standard of 1976:³³⁵ "... and as a benchmark, the FCM suggests one dollar per capita towards support for the arts." Milner noted that one of Ottawa's major problems in funding was related to its loss of property taxes from the NAC: "the problem with the NAC is that it is a federal property and pays no municipal taxes, which would, for any other property, be over two million dollars."³³⁶ In one of Canada's first publications about municipalities and the arts, Robert Bailey suggested that Ottawa foregoes much more: the city also lost taxes from the Ottawa Little Theatre and the National Gallery of Art.³³⁷ Bailey was more correct than Milner but neither was completely accurate: all federal and provincial property (plus Ottawa's many religious and educational

³³⁴ OCA, Mayor Marion Dewar Papers, RG7-11-2 C26/1A, file: Arts and Culture Background Information File #1, Ottawa-Carleton Arts Coalition letter.

³³⁵ The pioneering work of municipal arts councils in Vancouver and Montreal and Toronto led the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) to examine the role of municipalities with respect to the arts. On 17 June 1976 the FCM adopted a resolution concerning municipal funding for the arts in relation to the other two levels of government: that is, \$1 per capita at the municipal level, \$2 at the provincial level and \$3 at the federal level. At the same meeting, it was recommended that municipalities establish administrative units responsible for planning, administering and undertaking cultural activities, and that they carry out a study of short- and long-term objectives, with a view to providing services which would satisfy needs in terms of operations and facilities in the arts. From Robert Bailey, *Report: The Arts, People and Municipalities* (Toronto: Canadian Conference of the Arts, 1978), back of front cover.

³³⁶ Milner, interview.

³³⁷ According to Robert Bailey, in his 1976 arts support survey of 34 Canadian cities, "Ottawa foregoes \$2,366,500.00 in taxes (1977 dollars) for the Ottawa Little Theatre, the National Gallery of Canada, and the NAC." In Robert Bailey, *Report: The Arts, People and Municipalities* (Toronto: Canadian Conference of the Arts, 1978), p. 7, footnote 5.

institutions) was not taxable, though senior levels by the 1950s were providing grants in-lieu-of taxes.³³⁸

On 12 July 1978 the RMOC budget was reconsidered in light of the requests from the OCAC groups. Of the \$50,000.00 re-directed from the NAC, \$7,500.00 was given to the Nepean Symphony Orchestra (est. 1974) because it needed immediate RMOC support in order to lever matching funds from the Ottawa-Hull District Federation of Musicians Trust Fund. With this, the Symphony then provided 30 free concerts in the region's parks that summer of 1978. As mentioned, leveraging (funding contingent upon support from other corporate or government donors) was an important criteria in the RMOC's and the City's grants application process. OCAC members applied for the remaining funds but requests (\$112,900.00) exceeded available funding (\$42,500.00)³³⁹ so the RMOC depleted the fund by giving each group a percentage of what it had requested. According to Milner,

Marion [Dewar] told us [GCTC] to not ask for much because there wasn't much to give and a lot of groups needed the funds. We applied for \$3,000.00 and Penguin Theatre applied for \$10,000.00. Of course, they received a percentage as did the rest of us, but we were furious because they had the same size budget and company as we did. The next budget, we also applied for \$10,000.00 as did Penguin, but again, we both got the same as what we received the year before.

³³⁸ According to Carleton University professor John Taylor, many municipal funding problems dated to the massive unemployment situation of the Depression of the 1930s, when cities especially could not cope with their difficulties solely on the property tax revenues. In Ottawa, the Depression-era situation was further complicated by the federal authority not providing full grants in lieu of taxes on its property, amounting to about one-quarter of the city's property tax base.

To reconcile ability to tax with growing local responsibilities, provinces and the federal government began in the post-war period to provide grants in lieu of taxes to municipalities and also initiated many programs from urban housing to social welfare on the basis of "conditional" grants, or tied funding. For the arts sector in Ottawa, this meant that the provision of grants from the province or from the federal government was almost always tied to the sums the arts groups or artists could raise on their own or in concert with the local authorities. In other words, if the municipality of Ottawa did not provide an arts organization (or individual artists) with grants, then neither would the upper levels of government. It also meant that the richest groups got richer; the poorer groups remained in desperate need. With the addition of regional government in the Ottawa area, financial support became further complicated, and sponsorship programs evolved that were often as much based on financial, as artistic, merit.

³³⁹ OCA, RMOC, *Minutes*, 12 July 1978, p. 2541.

This was because the RMOC did not yet have a system in place for critical review and just did what they had done the year before.³⁴⁰

With the first grants to local arts groups, the RMOC realized change was inevitable and began to explore other regional governments' systems. It wrote letters soliciting advice: "In order to aid in the assessment of the requests for cultural service grants, RMOC staff has requested appropriate federal / provincial agencies which provide similar grants to send the Executive Secretary their criteria for the screening and review process."³⁴¹ It also asked a special review committee to "evaluate comparatively all requests for cultural service grants and to recommend the distribution of the funds available."³⁴²

A motion to establish an annual RMOC budget for cultural service grants of \$212,000.00 (40 cents per capita) was lost on a general vote, but recommended on the Executive vote, with Dewar as RMOC Acting Chairman. Those councillors who opposed the idea of annual appropriations had concerns that some of the organizations were professional, but in fact they were non-profit. They also questioned the wisdom of the RMOC spending money on what they considered to be local and not regional government expenditures.³⁴³ The approved motion stated: "Be it resolved that the Regional Municipality establish a policy to provide an annual allocation in the budget of Regional monies, for cultural services grants based on a per capita basis related to the population of the Regional Municipality and that the per capita basis for the 1979 budget

³⁴⁰ OCA, RMOC, *Minutes*, 27 September 1978, p. 3743.

³⁴¹ OCA, RMOC, *Minutes*, 12 July 1978, p. 2542.

³⁴² OCA, RMOC, *Minutes*, 27 September 1978, p. 3743.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 3746.

be established at \$.40 per capita.”³⁴⁴ This meant that the RMOC would purchase cultural services from the community, as well as from the NAC.

The RMOC’s interest in and strong support of the prestigious NAC to the detriment of the resident community was in direct opposition to the approach taken by many Canadian municipalities. These were developing their artistic bases by providing opportunities for amateurs to become semi-professional and then professional, through the provision of facilities and grants. Ottawa’s stance posed a continuing public relations dilemma for the local arts sector, because it had to justify itself not against standards set by other arts sectors in other Canadian cities, but against the standards of the NAC and the National Gallery. An unfair rating system was thus established in the city, with little government concern about the appropriateness of this unequal mode of judgment.

Despite these internal dilemmas, newspaper reviews of the OCAC’s work were favourable. George Galt, in the *Ottawa Citizen*, commented:

Cultural groups to share resources and press for greater public recognition and support – solidarity born of realization that they had many needs in common and that they were fighting many of the same battles against public indifference and government neglect. [...] The group [OCAC] has made a preliminary investigation of available physical space in the city [...] and they are organizing for local support and forming a united front, speaking about arts in and for and by the municipality. They also speak about the fundamental differences between large and small groups, for when there is a lack of funding the large group has to cut back but a small group suspends operations. The OCAC’s work on the peripheries is most important.³⁴⁵

But the coalition didn’t last. “It was at the time of the second budget that we realized that there was no point to the OCAC – the pot was so little that we were fighting each other for it instead of being able to work together for larger goals. So it

³⁴⁴ Ibid., Motion 286, p. 3809.

³⁴⁵ George Galt, *Ottawa Citizen* article, 10 November 1978.

disbanded.”³⁴⁶ The ability of the individual groups within the sector to work together for mutual purpose was limited because of funding competition.

The second conflict arose in 1975 when Le Hibou, centre of Ottawa’s counterculture movement, was forced to close because of National Capital Commission (NCC) business practices. Beginning in 1963, the NCC expropriated municipal buildings along Sussex Street, and renovated them in order to present the Centennial public with Confederation style heritage memories of Ottawa.³⁴⁷ Commercial tenants were forced out, and the empty warehouses and buildings in the Rideau, Sussex and market area later became home to a folk artists colony, centred at the coffeehouse Le Hibou. According to the owner Pierre Paul Lafrenière, in the early-1970s the coffeehouse circuit began to fade because Ontario lowered its drinking age and allowed bars to book entertainment, resulting in fewer customers. Le Hibou adjusted and offered new menus and more variety in their entertainment. However, in 1975, the NCC as landlord suddenly altered its real estate policies from cost recovery to commercial, and “no matter that the area was not developed, our rents went overnight from \$250.00 / month to \$2,500.00 / month.” Like the Ottawa Little Theatre with its RMOC problems in 1971, Le Hibou launched a fight, and its plight also generated broad corporate, private and media support. “People were saying that we were an institution, but we couldn’t convince the city in a partnership that would keep the place going. We closed down, declared bankruptcy, and that was it.” It was not the only group to cease: “... a large number of people got nailed along Sussex, as well as the people in the Chambers building across from the NAC on Elgin, because

³⁴⁶ Milner, interview.

³⁴⁷ For further information about NCC designated heritage buildings in the Capital Region, see: http://www.canadascapital.gc.ca/corporate/parks_heritage/heritage/heritage_building/heritage_building_e.asp#sussex. Accessed 26 June 2004.

they couldn't afford the new NCC rates" and although many of the groups offered the NCC "transition business plans" to allow them to stay while they reorganized, the NCC wouldn't alter its decision and the city would not mediate on the groups' behalf. Because of the NCC decision and a lack of interest from the city, Le Hibou closed forever in July 1975.³⁴⁸

The third and perhaps the most spectacular disaster that happened to the community during this period was the loss by the municipality of a gift of \$1 million. A private philanthropist wanted to underwrite a large portion of the capital costs of a municipal art gallery, and planned to go into a private - public partnership with the city to achieve that. But for three years, the city bickered and argued about the project until in disgust, the donor withdrew his gift.

The story began in late 1974, when an anonymous donor offered the city \$1 million because he was convinced that Ottawa needed its own municipal gallery. A similar offer in Saskatoon by Fred Mendel in 1960 had created the famous Mendel Gallery, and the donor wanted to honour Ottawa with a similar project. In early 1975 it was revealed that the gift came from Ottawa business tycoon and art devotee Harold Shenkman. In an interview at the time, Shenkman said he was making the gesture "because [I'm] convinced that Ottawa must have [its] own municipal gallery if area artists are to become more fully integrated into the life of the community, and to receive the recognition and encouragement they deserve." Shenkman envisioned the municipal gallery as an "exhibition space as well as workshop and studio space for local artists, artisans and photographers, with a design studio as well." He formed a committee comprised of himself, Victor Tolgyesy (chairman of Visual Arts Ottawa), and artists,

³⁴⁸ The artists-run, cooperative SAW Gallery moved to 72 Rideau Street. From Lafreniere, interview.

dealers, city and NCC representatives, to choose architects in open competition to design the gallery.³⁴⁹ At no cost to the city, the NCC offered the proposed gallery a property west of the Garden of the Provinces on Wellington Street, near the National Library and Archives.

In January 1976, trouble erupted when the Ottawa Municipal Arts Centre (OMAC) members realized the centre was not part of Schenkman's gallery plans. Municipal reaction was swift and angry, and there was discussion whether the city could afford to be a partner with Schenkman in this scenario.³⁵⁰ By July 1976, aldermen were voicing more concerns. The confusion occurred because, according to *Ottawa Journal* reporter Brian Chadderton, at the same time that the gift was announced, the OMAC also requested a larger space for the municipal art centre. With two proposals dealing with art, "many councillors [just] assumed the Schenkman proposal could contain facilities of the OMAC." But that was never Schenkman's intention and this came to light after a year of negotiations. While some councillors thought the gift suspicious - that the gallery would simply be a showcase for Schenkman's treasures³⁵¹ - Mayor Greenberg thought the idea worthy because "with the land free from the NCC and construction costs covered, the city could end up with a national arts facility at minimal cost."³⁵² By August 1976,

³⁴⁹ Valerie Knowles, "Portrait of a million dollar patron of the arts." *Ottawa Journal*, 1 March 1975, p. 37.

³⁵⁰ Brian Chadderton, "\$1 million gift the city can't afford to accept." *Ottawa Journal*, 14 January 1976, p. 1.

³⁵¹ A listing of some of these treasures is found in a Laurentian Chapter, IODE, May 1974 Annual House and Garden Tour *Ottawa Journal* preview and tour through Harold Schenkman's home. Schenkman was a real estate developer and builder of Ottawa's first shopping mall (Westgate, built in 1954). He combined his love of travelling with his love of art collecting and over the years amassed an extensive collection of Oriental objects d'art and African and Polynesian artefacts. In the article, Schenkman's international and Canadian collection held works by Jean-Paul Riopelle, Guy Monpetit, Jack Shadbolt, Lauren Harris, Jr., A.Y. Jackson, Arthur Lismer, Paul-Emile Borduas, A.J. Casson, Takao Tanabe, Emily Carr, Stanley Cosgrove and Eskimo (sic) sculptures by Art Price, among others. This would form the initial basis of the municipality's collection. From "Design for Art", *Ottawa Journal*, 2 May 1974, no author.

³⁵² Brian Chadderton, "Art centre plan feared 'showcase for millionaire'" *Ottawa Journal*, 14 July 1976, p. 1.

two camps had polarized around the issue. Local art lovers “launched a campaign to get political and public support” to ensure that city council “make a public commitment to proceed with the gallery.” Some opposing aldermen feared that “the city could be stuck with an estimated \$200,000.00 per year operating cost for the gallery.”³⁵³ In January 1977, Shenkman and a coterie of more than 40 artists, some of them professional, met with Greenberg and the Board of Control, which agreed to the deal. Greenberg noted “the group was an indication that there [was] considerable interest in arts and culture in Ottawa.”³⁵⁴ But Commissioner Robert Bailey of the Department of Community Development,³⁵⁵ under whose jurisdiction the OMAC, now called the Ottawa School of Art, fell, was not happy with the decision and preferred to study the matter farther. Vocal “visual arts centre proponents wanted nothing to do” with the art school because “the 1600 students would only contaminate the 600 professional artists in the city.” By the following week, the two sides were farther apart in their understanding of the issue. The Ottawa School of Art was suffering from a lack of space and demanding assistance from the municipality. Professional artists wanted a place to work and exhibit and Shenkman’s gallery would support that. The other faction wanted time to study the issue because they didn’t think that a gallery would “provide any direct service to the local community.”³⁵⁶ It was a stalemate.

³⁵³ Susan Riley, “Art gallery drive.” *Ottawa Journal*, 11 August 1976, p. 3.

³⁵⁴ Brian Chadderton, “Controllers okay new arts centre.” *Ottawa Journal*, 19 January 1977, p. 4.

³⁵⁵ The Department of Recreation and Parks became the Department of Community Development on 19 August 1974, *Ottawa By-Law 225-74*.

³⁵⁶ Brian Chadderton, “Objections mount: Lobbyists hit the far over arts centre plan.” *Ottawa Journal*, 26 January 1977, p. 3.

Finally, on 7 February 1977, Shenkman withdrew his offer because of the controversy it had generated. In an interview with Journal reporter Chadderton, Shenkman stated: "I feel it would be better [...] for me to withdraw my offer [...] and end the controversy. I never dreamt that my offer would have instituted [...] a furious political battle and a continuing debate with no foreseeable conclusion."³⁵⁷ In the aftermath of the fallout, Nepean reeve Andy Haydon suggested that Shenkman give the \$1 million to Nepean, which would "shoulder maintenance costs of between \$200,000 and \$300,000 a year [...] with a minimum of fuss."³⁵⁸ Shenkman wrote to Haydon and said: "I have lost interest at least for the time being in contributing to the creation of a new home for the arts,"³⁵⁹ and declined the offer.

Rejected by the municipality, the regional government and the NCC, as well corporate supporters and the upper echelons of government,³⁶⁰ the local arts sector worked hard to obtain "the resources and freedom to make professional level production possible" in Ottawa.³⁶¹ There were a number of setbacks but most importantly, although the OCAC disbanded within a year of organizing, it paved the way for future endeavours. One advantage was that the public, which wanted its cultural taste acknowledged and

³⁵⁷ Brian Chadderton, "Shenkman withdraws \$1 million art offer" *Ottawa Journal*, 7 February 1977, p. 1.

³⁵⁸ Duart Snow, "Nepean after the million." *Ottawa Journal*, 9 February 1977, p. 1

³⁵⁹ Peter Gibbs, "Shenkman rejects bid." *Ottawa Journal*, 17 February 1977, p. 3.

³⁶⁰ In one of Canada's first documents regarding the Canadian arts support system, author Robert Bailey outlined four areas that needed to be considered by municipalities, with regard to their local arts sectors. 1) Financing meant providing "... grants directly to arts organizations or artists." 2) Programming meant "initiating, sponsoring, conducting or otherwise facilitating the development of the performing, visual, and other arts, through provision of programs." 3) Services were for "promotion, publicity, secretarial, communication, and coordination of community arts organizations." 4) Capital funds were for "research, develop, or provision of facilities such as theatres, museums, art galleries and office space." And from the arts community, advice was needed to "provide the local authorities with ideas on arts policies and funding, urban design, public art commissions, arts education, etc." From Bailey, p. 11.

³⁶¹ David Mitchell, "Culture as Political Discourse in Canada" in Rowland M. Lorimer and Donald C. Wilson, eds., *Communication Canada: Issues in Broadcasting and New Technologies* (Kagan and Woo Limited, Toronto, 1988), p. 165.

validated through political means, sided with the artists and attempted to convince the politicians that there was a place for art in the contemporary society of Ottawa.

The negative features of the 1975 to 1978 period -- the federal NAC acquiring municipal and regional government funds; the NCC "foreclosing" on Le Hibou; and the municipality forfeiting \$1 million -- were countered by a tremendous improvement in the artistic and political abilities of the sector. The unprecedented increase in both professional and amateur artistic activity at this time was unlike anything the city had ever experienced. For the artists and audiences, sensibilities and understandings shifted. A post-Centennial repertoire emphasized Canadian stories rather than European canons, and there was an altered nationalistic emphasis on Canadian culture in opposition to the American dominance of entertainment. In response, arts companies changed their foci and some of the public was inspired to move away from the national or international culture glamour shows of the NAC and return to artistic entertainment that was more representative of local people.

Artists engaged in Canadian repertory work were emboldened by this change in audience appreciation. At the same time, interaction between the fine art school graduates (the first generation in Canada capable of establishing arts careers) and the older pioneers in the city meant that Ottawa finally had the critical mass necessary to make political changes for the local cultural scene. A new artistic vision in the city developed, and with increased public interest, and increased numbers of local artists, the existing cultural framework that had served the community for decades became inadequate. As David Currie, conductor of the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra (OSO) suggested through the example of the Ottawa Civic Symphony:

When I came to Ottawa in 1971, the orchestra was a kind of high school string level, amateur group, very community based. I doubt the members paid to be in the group. It had a socializing, musical function and that was a very positive thing. [...] But as you start to build an institution, there is a board, and funding and administration, and payment of capital costs. As you build infrastructure, you need a civic arts policy because you need funders. When we can do everything out of our basements, then there is no capital cost. But once something grows [beyond that] then staff and offices are needed, because the *function* of the art changes.

With the change, the challenge became to create the responsive and professional arts infrastructure required by the needs of various disciplines (dance, drama, music, visual art). Professional arts products required consistency and the commitment of labour and time, for which an organization had to pay. Because the product was not produced in the mass quantities necessary for market profitability, they required non-market assistance in the form of capital, operating and project grants, in order to maintain their evolving professional standard. As Currie said “The orchestra [was to] provide a professional product to the region, and an opportunity to people, both to the audience and performers, and [it was] part of the growth of community” and this required municipal involvement.³⁶² With these evolutionary changes, culture became a political issue driven by major accomplishments within the various arts disciplines.

In music, Brian Law became conductor of the Ottawa Civic Symphony Orchestra in 1975. When the orchestra began to perform at the NAC, it encountered new demands. It needed more money, had to develop new markets, and maintain the higher musical standards required of professional artists. The following year, perhaps as a reflection of its new status, the Ottawa Civic Symphony became the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra.³⁶³

³⁶² David Currie, (former NACO member, current conductor of OSO, professor of music at the University of Ottawa), interview by author, Ottawa, Ontario, 20 January 2004.

³⁶³ Baird, “Ottawa Philharmonic Orchestra” in EMC 1006b.

Members of the NAC Orchestra (NACO) formed a professional chamber ensemble called Thirteen Strings, and Law was appointed conductor. This ensemble played not only at the NAC but also in community spaces, and offered competition to local artists. This competition was detrimental as well as beneficial; although locals, as entrepreneurs, suffered financially as they were not supported by NAC employment, the situation also elevated existing artistic standards.

In the 1970s the school boards' priorities shifted away from choral music in high schools, so the Central Alumni Choir was formed in 1976 for the graduates of the OBE Central Children's Choir.³⁶⁴ According to founder and conductor Barbara Clark, there were difficulties in this transition, especially because it was no longer under the umbrella of the school board.

The Alumni Choir was an outgrowth of the Children's Choir, but it received no funding from any source, and it broke away from the school board to form as a not-for-profit community choir. It [had to] raise its own funds.³⁶⁵

In dance, two communities emerged in Ottawa during this time: one for traditional ballet and jazz, and one for modern dance. For the latter, Le Groupe de la Place Royale moved to Ottawa in 1977 and quickly established itself as an internationally renowned producer of modern dancers and choreographers. Le Groupe began in Montreal in 1966 and was founded by Jeanne Renaud, a member of the 1940s *automiste* group of Quebec; a revolutionary arts organization that worked in part to break the Catholic Church bonds against "indecent and immoral" showing of the body through dance. In 1971, New Yorker Peter Boneham became artistic director of the company and

³⁶⁴ The Ottawa Public School Board's *Central Children's Choir* was founded in 1959.

³⁶⁵ Clark, interview.

it toured worldwide; in 1977, it retired to Ottawa where it continued its heritage as “an eloquent creator of works carrying a distinct socio-political commentary.”³⁶⁶

A year after Le Groupe’s arrival, Joyce Shietze and Merrilee Hodgins started the School of Dance. Since the 1960s, Shietze had worked as a professional instructor for the city of Ottawa at the Lindenlea Municipal Ballet School, which had an enviable reputation in Canada because many of its students received full scholarships to attend the National Ballet School in Toronto.³⁶⁷ But problems loomed. According to city drama specialist O’Brien, it was in the 1970s when he realized that a change was happening in the cultural recreation program in the Department of Recreation and Parks.

Don Gamble, Director of Recreation and Parks decided that the Lindenlea School of Ballet would close to become a regular community centre. Essentially, we had a community centre that wasn’t being used as a community centre. The city closed Lindenlea and turned it over as a community centre. It had no concern about losing all these wonderful dancers like Joyce Shietze, and I thought, my boss doesn’t support this, so where the hell are we going?³⁶⁸

Hodgins came to Ottawa as a performer at the NAC, and worked with Celia Franca, founder of the National Ballet. According to Hodgins, Ottawa intrigued her, but she remembers how disconcerted she was at the lack of professional arts infrastructure in the city.

I am a westerner, from Edmonton, Alberta. Municipalities and partnerships with arts organizations and government funders in the west was not a brand new thing. Even when I was a student there were funding balances happening between the

³⁶⁶ Max Wyman, “Dancing into the Light: Dance and the Québécois Identity” in Glen Carruthers and Gordana Lazarevich, *A Celebration of Canadian Arts 1930 – 1970*, (Toronto: Canadian Scholars’ Press Inc., 1966), pp. 141 – 142.

³⁶⁷ It is unknown when the Lindenlea Municipal Ballet School first opened, but by the mid-1960s it was well established. According to the Department of Recreation and Parks Annual Report 1968, (p. 30), the School “has earned a national reputation for providing an excellent grounding in both classical ballet and modern jazz. This year, two of its students, nine year old Stephanie Earle and eleven year old Dianne Proulx were invited with approximately 30 others from across Canada to continue their schooling and dance instruction on full scholarship at the National Ballet School in Toronto.”

³⁶⁸ O’Brien, interview.

cities and the arts organizations, in the 1960s and 1970s. When I came [to Ottawa] I could see that there was an active theatre and music scene here, with not a great deal of organization about it – more flurries of activity where people who had talent, or people who were very good at putting together shows. It was such a surprise to me that there weren't a lot of partnerships that existed.³⁶⁹

Shietze and Hodgins began with three teachers, a tiny budget, and a small studio, at the west end of Wellington Street.³⁷⁰

In theatre, according to Ottawa director and actor Eleanor Crowder, there was a crossover of efforts in the art world, and “Le Groupe did both dance and voice and contact improv [improvisation] work. There was a man there who was teaching this as well as Japanese style voice work. This was vital and new to those of us in the theatre community.”³⁷¹ With this linking of disciplines and merging of boundaries, it was in theatre that the biggest evolution occurred, and schools, municipal workshops, amateur troupes, several professional companies, and even a circus company exploded onto the Ottawa scene during the late 1970s. Each change required a new form of community support.

In 1975, in Ottawa's not-for-profit amateur theatre scene, the Irish Society of Ottawa Drama Group and the Dauphin Players merged to become the Tara Players, which began performing in the Hillcrest High School auditorium, under the sponsorship of Hillcrest Community Council.³⁷² The Savoy Society of Ottawa started a musical

³⁶⁹ The School of Dance continues today (2004) in its new home within the former Crichton Street Public School building. Merrilee Hodgins (co-founder Ottawa School of Dance), interview with author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 19 January 2004.

³⁷⁰ Hodgins, interview.

³⁷¹ Crowder, interview.

³⁷² Tara Players (est. 1975) began in an Ottawa School Board building, but within two seasons, rents and technical union conditions became unacceptable. In 1977 the company moved to Algonquin College but the College couldn't guarantee them space because of increasing enrolment, so the group then moved to the auditorium of St. Patrick's Parish Hall at 280 Gloucester Street, in 1978. The hall had been built around 1900 but in the 1950s the parishioners

theatre organization to stage Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, and performed at *L'École Sécondaire de La Salle* on Old St. Patrick Street.³⁷³ In professional theatre, two new French companies began to serve the French population of the city. *Le Théâtre de la Corvée* played at the York Street Theatre, which was a tiny, second floor walk-up theatre in the market area. *Le Théâtre du Trillium* had no theatre and performed as space was found. In 1976, the University of Ottawa Drama Guild started in the newly renovated Academic Hall. In 1978, the NCC started the Penny Farthing Circus, and the Rag and Bone Puppet Theatre of Ottawa began with this group as one of Canada's first professional puppet theatres.³⁷⁴ All were small but lively ventures that met with resounding audience success.³⁷⁵

Despite all this positive activity, there were also drawbacks, as some professional artists refused to accept Ottawa's inferior conditions and moved their companies elsewhere. Richard Pochinko, known as one of Canada's foremost figures in "Clown and Mask," opened the Theatre Resource Centre in July 1975, in a rented convent on Breezehill Avenue in Ottawa. Pochinko, a former NAC teacher of the Student Young Company, established a two-year Apprentice Actors' Training Workshop, and hired professional dancers, actors, and mimes to work with students.³⁷⁶ He and the school also

moved to the suburbs and the facility lay dormant from 1957 - 1977. The amateur group cleaned and renovated the hall, and raised a substantial sum to purchase theatrical lighting equipment. They remained at St. Patrick's until 2003.

³⁷³ *L'École Sécondaire de La Salle* was the new school building but the same institution that sheltered the Stage Society in 1948-1949, the CRT in 1949-1956, and the Town Theatre in 1966-1969.

³⁷⁴ The Puppet Theatre still continues today, and offers about 100 school and in-house shows and workshops each year. Information from Kathy MacLellan and John Nolan (co-artistic directors and founders of the Rag and Bone Puppet Theatre), telephone interview with author, Ottawa, Ontario, 14 July 2004.

³⁷⁵ In addition, the City of Ottawa continued with its amateur drama programs, which acted as a feeder for the semi-professional level. For example, the City of Ottawa offered a 20-week Youth Theatre Workshop from October 1974 - March 1975 at the Ottawa Municipal Drama Centre, Reid Avenue and Sherwood Drive.

³⁷⁶ It was incorporated as an educational institution with the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

did community theatre programs. Where a decade earlier the art of clowning was almost non-existent, he spawned a generation of professional clown performers.³⁷⁷ But after one year away from the NAC environment, he found the local working climate of the city unsuited to professional artistic advancement and he moved the Centre to Toronto in 1976. In the same year, the NAC Student Young Companies ceased and with that, Ottawa's student artists lost two of their strongest theatre programs.

Perhaps the most political of Ottawa's performing arts groups was the Great Canadian Theatre Company (GCTC), founded in 1975 as an offshoot of the English department at Carleton University. Arthur Milner, of the OCAC, was playwright and actor in the GCTC. Because of the work of Milner and the others in the company, it became known in Ottawa as the radical theatre company and although similar work had been done in Toronto for several years, it was novel in Ottawa and the local newspaper reviews were vindictive towards the GCTC productions.

There were groups in existence in Toronto seven years before the GCTC started that were dedicated to doing Canadian plays – they were hardly new, and yet we were reviled in the Ottawa press for our content and plays.³⁷⁸

The GCTC wrote and produced Canadian plays and this emphasis was a political decision. The documentary shows featured

... the disenfranchised, the native people, women, workers – it was all politicized. There were shows where the labour organizers from Toronto came, somewhat reminiscent of the workers' theatre in the 1930s. And there was a core of people in Toronto and the GCTC who saw themselves as the inheritors of a deliberate left-wing theatre tradition. It was a nationalist theatre.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁷ <http://www.canadianclowning.com/power.html>. Accessed 23 June 2004.

³⁷⁸ Milner, interview.

³⁷⁹ Crowder, interview.

The reason for the Canadian repertoire emphasis, according to Milner, was because the company felt that "Canada [needed to] engage in a struggle for its own independence, and tell its own stories [because] an inordinate amount of the arts that we [did was] from other countries." In conjunction, political activism came about because "there was this turmoil that created a kind of political consciousness and a demand that if I am going to be an actor, I insist that there be companies that will hire me."³⁸⁰

Many theatre people at that time subsisted on federal government OFY grants and LIP grants. Milner agreed that times were tough at first for the company.

When we started in 1975, we took whatever was left after expenses – very unprofessional but our goal was to become professional. I made \$35.00 for my first play. There was a procedure for the Canada Council and the Ontario Arts Council that once you had done a few shows and had proven yourself, then you could get some operating money.³⁸¹

For a facility, the GCTC alternated between the university theatre and Ottawa's redundant Sunnyside Fire Hall. Fellow actor Eleanor Crowder remembered when

... the GCTC did professional shows, big community plays, and lots of kids' shows. When they moved to the old fire hall in Ottawa South it was downstairs where you could seat about 100 people with a long skinny stage at one side, and they used Carleton's Theatre A for the bigger shows.³⁸²

But it was impossible to get either place for a three-week run. Tours and school shows made up for the loss, but for the company there was always a search for a building where they could store, administer, rehearse and perform, all in one location.

In 1976, a second professional English theatre opened. The Penguin Theatre Company formed as an alternate theatre to the political GCTC. It too had a problem

³⁸⁰ Milner, interview.

³⁸¹ Ibid.

³⁸² Crowder, interview.

finding workspace, and the Ottawa Roman Catholic Separate School Board (ORCSSB)'s Artist in Residence Program (est. 1971) came to the rescue. The program provided empty rooms or basements to artists in return for services for students and staff, at no cost to either. Penguin began at Canadian Martyrs School on Graham Avenue. According to Crowder,

... the school basement was Penguin's theatre. It had maybe 50 – 70 seats. They had a little tiny space that they would paint for each show. At that point the [Catholic] school board was very pro-artist. Buses were readily available and they would bus kids in to see theatre.

Both GCTC and Penguin did Eastern Ontario and Western Quebec touring shows, to make up for the lack of performance space in Ottawa. But that was tough.

Each had a van so they did shows right across Eastern Ontario. Sometimes it was awful, like travelling to Cornwall in an unheated van in the middle of the winter at 5 a.m. – you were sick. But it was a lot going on with two touring companies, two seasons, and the new Theatre 2000 in the market.³⁸³

Space was also a problem for Theatre 2000, which began in 1976 and rented a second floor, market area walk up that was, according to Milner

dingy and small and inadequate but compared to nothing, it was way better than nothing. [...] The GCTC was portrayed as the theatre that cared about politics, Penguin was considered the theatre that cared about art, and Theatre 2000 was considered the exciting young company.³⁸⁴

But Theatre 2000's space could only accommodate 60 – 80 people so there was "no possibility of ticket revenue growth beyond just keeping it going."³⁸⁵ For a city with no arts facilities, that was the on-going dilemma.

³⁸³ Ibid.

³⁸⁴ Milner, interview.

³⁸⁵ Crowder, interview.

To address that problem, adaptations were made and new solutions were found that didn't include capital structures. The festival concept - an idea that began in 1958 in Ottawa with the Lakeshore Festival of the Arts and had carried on for several years - required no permanent facilities, and in the summer of 1976 the municipality extended project funding to three short-term festivals. Funding for these came from the 150th Anniversary of By-Town events budget.³⁸⁶ In June 1976 (*La Fête de la St-Jean*), the first *Festival franco-ontarien* opened in the Byward Market in celebration of French-Canadian cultural heritage.³⁸⁷ During that summer, the first Ottawa International Film Festival was also launched. And for the audiences and artists of folk music, the Bytown Live Entertainment Association, by now a permanent Sunday night feature at the municipal Jack Purcell Community Centre, performed at the city's first Festival for the Folks (1976 – 1979), held at Brewer Park. The latter was an extension of the work done by the former Le Hibou.³⁸⁸

Requirements for visual artists were different from those of the performing arts. The former needed facilities that supported visual art creation – basics such as ventilation hoods for paint fumes, kilns, presses, easels, properly lit workspaces – and places for exhibition. Due to the longstanding presence of the National Gallery of Art in the city, competition for audiences did not have as severe an impact on the arts system as did the NAC's presence on the local performers.

³⁸⁶ "Since Ottawa is the Nation's Capital, the celebrations must take on a national flavour as well as be a local affair." From OCA, Ottawa, *Minutes*, 1976, p. 1007.

³⁸⁷ For further information about the *Festival Franco-ontarien*, see: http://www.ffo.ca/28c_Edition/historique.htm. Accessed 1 July 2004.

³⁸⁸ Lafrenière, interview. Arthur McGregor (Manager of Carleton University's Roosters Café), Pierre-Paul Lafrenière (owner of the former Le Hibou, co-founder of the Bytown Live Entertainment Association), and students from CUSO (Carleton University Student Association), founded the Festival for the Folks.

One of the first major events of the period that politicized culture was the Visual Arts Ottawa Survey Exhibition No. 1 at Lansdowne Park in the summer of 1975.³⁸⁹ The Exhibition was the “first comprehensive survey of the visual arts in Ottawa-Outaouais and the Valley” and represented 154 local artists displaying 240 works of all media.³⁹⁰ Walter Herbert wrote an introductory essay to the program and highlighted the peculiarity of the national capital arts scene.

In 1967, when the municipal arts centres and galleries of Vancouver and London and Yarmouth and Pointe Claire and Calgary and Levis and Kitchener and Brandon exhibited the works of their regional artists with great pride the Ottawa Valley was sadly invisible. Except for the National Gallery and, as the Prince of Denmark said, there's the rub. Canadians are justly proud of their National Gallery. [...] Unwittingly it casts a shadow over the Ottawa Valley community (and not over any other community in Canada) to such an extent that genuine concern about regional art facilities has not developed normally...³⁹¹

This situation mirrored the efforts that began in 1958 with the NCJWO Annual Art Exhibition and Sale, and yet was very different both in its origins and outcomes. Pat Durr, professional visual artist, former OMAC teacher, and one of the main creators and organizers of the Exhibition, said the show developed out of a desire to present the best of local talent, and to demonstrate the need for a local public art gallery.

In 1967 when Jack Chambers began fighting to have copy “rights” to his own work and set up CARFAC,³⁹² we set up CARO (Canadian Artists' Representation Ottawa).³⁹³ The show grew out of CARO's efforts and took two years of volunteer labour to organize. There were thousands of applications from a fifty-mile radius that included both Ontario and Quebec, and we accepted by jury and

³⁸⁹ OCA, Mayor Marion Dewar Papers, RG7-11-8, file: Reports and Printed Material & RG7-11-7, Box 101, C26/4a.

³⁹⁰ The event was from 15 May to 28 June 1975. Information found on the front cover of the *Visual Arts Ottawa Survey Exhibition No. 1* program.

³⁹¹ Walter Herbert, “Introduction” *Visual Arts Ottawa Survey Exhibition No. 1* in the Hall of Commerce Building at Lansdowne Park, 15 May to 28 June 1975.

³⁹² CARFAC (Canadian Arts Representation / Front des artistes canadiens)

³⁹³ These were programs that permitted artists to earn an income through reproduction of their work.

took only according to the space we had. The artists were not paid to be in the show, but it was juried and that was a novel experience for many. National Gallery of Canada docents gave tours *pro bono*, and we sold works.³⁹⁴

Following the exhibition, a professional artists' lobby group formed to keep the gallery issue in the municipal political foreground. The Visual Arts Centre Advisory Committee (VACAC) was dedicated to establishing a public art gallery in Ottawa, and worked collaboratively with philanthropist Shenkman, the OMAC, and the municipality.

On the amateur cultural recreation level, the most significant political-cultural change concerned the OMAC. The OMAC was the city's most prominent indication of a commitment to the arts in Ottawa, and its story typifies how that responsibility was fulfilled. In 1977, the OMAC changed its name to the Ottawa School of Art (OSA), and became a not-for-profit venture and a legal entity separate from the municipality, while still retaining municipal support for its community services. This change allowed the OSA to raise funds from sources such as the Ontario Arts Council (est. 1963), the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation (est. 1975), and from WINTARIO (est. 1975).³⁹⁵ The name change also signalled a new purpose and a determination to establish independence. Pleas to the city for improved accommodation in which to fulfil this new mission led to a move from the Spay and Neuter Humane Society building to the Notre Dame des Anges School on Forward Avenue (1977 – 1983). It was a slight improvement. With the move, attendance again increased, but volunteer administrators (from 1953 to 1977) were unable to cope with the new and increased demands of the centre. In 1977, after 25 years of

³⁹⁴ Pat Durr (former president of CARO, professional artist), interview with author, Ottawa, Ontario, 5 April 2003.

³⁹⁵ The WINTARIO program began in 1975 and closed in 1996. Game proceeds were dedicated through the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation to promote physical fitness, sports, culture and recreational activities. For further information about the Ontario Lottery Corporation, see: Ontario Lottery Corporation website, accessed 1 July 2004. http://corporate.olg.ca/corp_about_history_1975-1989.jsp.

requests, the city finally agreed to pay for the services of one full-time administrator. Her job was to run the facility for the 2,100 students, the dozen teachers, and perform all other administrative functions. Volunteers continued to assist.³⁹⁶ The OSA was Ottawa's most prominent manifestation of the city's commitment to the local arts community.

The final major change during the 1974 – 1978 period happened to the municipal Department of Recreation and Parks itself. For the first time in the city's history, in 1973 the Department announced a five-year plan for the sector. This was followed in 1974 by the decision to create a long-requested municipal arts facility.

The conception of an Ottawa Centre for the Arts will be the prime objective in 1974 and the next three years. This goal will see a departure from what has traditionally been offered and see great expansion in existing activities.³⁹⁷

But the value of this five-year plan, which included expenditures for capital funding, was limited. There appeared two streams of thought for the implementation of this agenda. On the one hand, within the cultural recreation section some municipal government advocates attempted to push ahead with long-term plans for the sector. On the other hand, the placement of culture within the Department of Recreation and Parks hierarchy signalled that it was of minimal interest to the municipality. Owner of Le Hibou Lafrenière remembers:

About the arts in terms of recreation – they were creating an environment where they felt they were contributing to the good life for the citizens – embellishing life in the city. They tended to look towards recreation in its broadest terms as being skating, swimming, softball, and baseball fields. Good health was the focus. Arts came into it very much at the hobby level. It was almost paint-by-numbers and painting on pre-fired clay pots. In Ottawa, it was a situation where it was left to individuals in the community to try and get something happening.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁶ Ricketts, p. 9. In the 1975 – 1976 season, there were 2,025 students enrolled, with a large number of part-time teachers. A great deal of administration was required of the one employee.

³⁹⁷ Introduction of the "Annual Report 1973: Cultural Activities", Ottawa Department of Recreation and Parks.

³⁹⁸ Lafrenière, interview.

For example, in the summer of 1974, the Department published an orientation kit for recreation staff, and listed six categories of responsibility: aquatics, athletics, community activities, facilities and equipment, public relations, and special needs. The latter included a senior citizens program, a handicapped persons program, and finally, culture. Included within this kit was a single sheet that listed all of the known arts providers in the city. It cited media institutions,³⁹⁹ government agencies,⁴⁰⁰ nationally focused arts organizations,⁴⁰¹ and four city arts groups.⁴⁰² It appeared there was lack of knowledge or communication within the municipality regarding key elements of the city's cultural community, and the city's misguided list of artistic organizations and members suggested a confusion of purpose and implied that the arts community lacked self-promotion and was poorly known within the broader Ottawa community. At the end of the summer, the Department changed its name and became the Department of Community Development – an indication that the concept and role of recreation was beginning to change in contemporary society.⁴⁰³

³⁹⁹ The media included CJOH "Home Base" and "Bail Out", and the CBC.

⁴⁰⁰ Community groups included school boards, Leisure Canada, Children's Aid Society, Protestant Children's Village, Community Service Unit, Ottawa Boy's Club Association, Gloucester Recreation and Parks, Social Welfare, and Welcome Wagon.

⁴⁰¹ National focus arts organizations included the National Gallery of Canada, Theatre Canada and Canadian Theatre Centre.

⁴⁰² City arts groups included Lakeside Theatre Productions, L'Atelier, Westboro Pottery Studio, and the Ottawa Municipal Art Centre.

⁴⁰³ The Department of Recreation and Parks became the Department of Community Development on 19 August 1974, Ottawa, *By-Law 225-74*.

Two years later, the City of Ottawa Community Development Department created the Information Handbook '76.⁴⁰⁴ This was a major document for the arts community and indicated great progress had been made in merging the various municipal cultural recreation objectives. The Handbook, promoted as a resource tool "to foster an awareness of the many cultural groups in the City,"⁴⁰⁵ was important not only in its descriptions of the groups but in its sheer quantity of information. It was the first documented indication of the breadth of the sector's scope, and the impact of this self-realization on the arts community, was profound. As not-for-profit volunteer or professional organizations, most worked out of their basements and operated as a network within their individual disciplines of music, dance, drama and visual art. But with the Handbook directory, the need for a larger infrastructure to address their common needs became evident. The Information Handbook '76 was the first step in creating that larger network, and in the development of a municipal cultural infrastructure and, ultimately, a municipal cultural policy.⁴⁰⁶

In addition, from 1974 to 1978, the municipality increased its funding to arts organizations, perhaps in recognition of the aid system that had developed for culture.

⁴⁰⁴ OCA. Information Handbook '76 was the result of a ten-week project grant, proposed by the City of Ottawa Department of Community Development and funded by the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation.

⁴⁰⁵ City of Ottawa Community Development Department, *Information Handbook '76*, p. i.

⁴⁰⁶ This was the city's second major attempt to outline a long-term program for municipal cultural development. The first attempt was made in 1973 (see Ottawa Recreation and Parks, Annual Report 1973, p. 20). The Handbook stated five areas of responsibility for its three staff persons, who were to organize and administer programs in drama, art, pottery, music, and dance. The report listed all the children, teens and adults' classes that the Department offered in Ottawa Board of Education schools and in community recreation centres all over the region, with a total of 31 courses in the winter (January to March), 4 courses in the spring (April to June), 40 courses in the summer (July to September) and 39 courses in the fall (October to December). These courses were offered by city recreation staff and by others hired by the city. For theatre, the city worked with l'Atelier d'Ottawa and the Lakeside Theatre Productions (LTP, est. 1963) and offered professional drama classes through these groups at the beginning of the 1976 – 1977 season. LTP "was a volunteer body that provided theatre for children [...] and the city maintained LTP's rehearsal spaces and gave it free rent in the community centres for its productions." From the City of Ottawa, Department of Community Development, *Annual Report for Culture 1976*, p. 9.

The Ottawa Choral Society, the Ottawa Civic Symphony (later called the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra), and the Ottawa Music Festival continued to be the standard recipients, but there were also newcomers such as the Ottawa Central Children's Choir, the U.S. Armed Forces Bicentennial Band, the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America, the Dance Centre, and the GCTC, which began to receive funds.

Finally, increased municipal interest in other non-traditional urban planning areas was also evident. In June 1977, the Ottawa Social Planning Council instituted a community planning and monitoring project, and in November 1977 published its findings in the *Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton: Community Planning and Monitoring in Neighbourhoods Report*. The report was important because it indicated a dramatic shift in urban planning philosophy from one that focused on the mere adequacy of services and institutions to one that was community-oriented and included citizen participation through a description of social needs and solutions. Historically, urban planners in the city had focused primarily on building and maintaining an infrastructure of hard services such as roads, sewers, water, fire and police protection, along with public housing and health and welfare systems. With these in place, the social council report recommended that urban planning be broadened to include citizen participation in its decision-making process. To facilitate citizen input, the social council proposed to survey and catalogue the community's social requirements, through LOGAN (Listing of Overall Goals and Needs). Importantly, this agenda included the needs of the cultural community.

Conclusion

Through these activities, the municipality began a process of acceptance of culture (and other formally marginalized activities) as a necessary and intrinsic part of modern community life. As public agreement and endorsement of this agenda increased, the discrepancies between the level of municipal support for arts and the public demand for arts products diminished. In addition, with the increased size of the arts sector, positive improvements occurred in artistic administrative endeavours and the sector began to rebound from the effect that the NAC's presence had on the arts community. However, the economic downturn and the demands of the federal NAC for economic support from the municipal and regional governments infringed greatly on the local arts sector's ability to move forward in its professional arts infrastructure agenda, despite its newly developed abilities. A double standard was set in place. The resolution of the tension that these decisions induced became the main focus of effort by the local arts community over the next decade. In fact, it was the *raison d'être* for a municipal cultural policy, with which the sector could consolidate gains and ensure future improvements.

Chapter Six (1979 – 1985)

As we have seen, during the mid-1970s, the municipal and regional governments began to fund the federal NAC. In 1974, the municipality of Ottawa granted it \$100,000.00,⁴⁰⁷ a grant twice the size of all civic grants to local cultural groups in the thirty years from 1944 to 1974.⁴⁰⁸ This was a one-time, municipal event. In the same year, the RMOC also began to fund the NAC, and from 1974 to 1978, it received \$631,375.00.⁴⁰⁹ In 1976, Councillor Marion Dewar exposed the RMOC practice and the following year met with local arts groups, revealed her findings, and suggested the sector mobilize politically if change was desired. As a result, the Ottawa-Carleton Arts Coalition was formed in 1978.

The local arts community was frustrated by the recurring transfer of local taxes to a federal institution, a municipal government's secretiveness, and decades of unfruitful requests for infrastructure development and grants. Rejections were justified with the rationale that federal cultural fare provided generously for Ottawa audiences and it was redundant for the municipality to duplicate this windfall. Resistance to the arts community's demands was also voiced in terms of the municipality's other priorities, clients, and interests – essentially, the city felt its role was to provide support to existing arts activities, but not to lead in long term development of the sector.⁴¹⁰ But in granting funds to the NAC, the municipal and regional governments had agreed in principle and in

⁴⁰⁷ OCA, *Ottawa, By-Law 18-74*.

⁴⁰⁸ The total amount of grants given to the local arts community from 1944 to 1974 (excluding grants to the federal civil service recreation association, the Dominion Drama Festival, and the NAC) totalled \$37,025.00. From Ottawa, *City Bylaws*, 1944 to 1974 inclusive.

⁴⁰⁹ NAC, *Annual Reports*, 1974 – 1978.

⁴¹⁰ This position of supporting rather than developing or enhancing the sector was reiterated in "The City's Role in Support the Arts", 2 December 1987 Ottawa City Council minutes, p. 1-120.

practice on the importance of artistic culture for community life, and they showed that they were willing to pay for it. In Ottawa, success in securing arts grants from either the municipality or the region was characterized by intergovernmental accommodation with a bias towards established high profile institutions. There was an “if you will build it they will fund” Catch-22 situation dependent on political contact and organizational favouritism.

Complaints by cultural groups to municipal, regional, provincial and federal authorities were ignored, and the public perception was that the sector was well served. Politicians neither listened to nor cared for artists complaining about the federal incursions into Ottawa’s local arts sector space. This attitude was the capstone to decades of arguing on the basis of “art for art’s sake”, “art for the government’s sake”, “art for the economy’s sake”, and more recently, “art for social wellbeing.” In the 1970s, the local arts sector mobilized for action, and in 1978 it shamed the RMOC into ensuring it received annual funds, just as the NAC did. It also laid claim to regional support for the construction of infrastructure for the local arts community’s development. In essence, what the sector wanted was a separate place where “the locality [wouldn’t] surrender itself to the nation whenever the nation demanded.”⁴¹¹

While this relationship played out, other major economic, social and political changes aided the pursuit of local cultural independence. Ottawa’s economy was becoming more diversified, with non-government interests such as the high technology sector establishing themselves in the regional marketplace.

⁴¹¹ Magnusson, p. 54.

Into this context, Ottawa's first-ever reform mayor and council were elected in November 1978 and took office in January 1979. Almost immediately, greater attention to social and cultural issues became prime municipal objectives. No longer was business the main "public" to which the council catered; now it was just another special interest group. As expected, there was consternation from conservative factions, but change was the constant. Under Mayor Marion Dewar and council, the identity of Ottawa began to evolve from one which abdicated cultural responsibilities to suit national purposes to one that focused on resident citizens' needs. This included championing the cause of the local arts sector.

During Dewar's mandate (1979 – 1985), the infrastructure problems that plagued the arts sector for decades – lack of facilities, funding, and promotion, and more recently, NAC appropriations of municipal and regional grant monies - began to be resolved. Mayor Greenberg, Dewar's predecessor, had established cultural heritage precedents a few years' earlier, with the founding of the Billings Estate Museum in 1975 and the City Archives in 1976.⁴¹² But for programs related to the visual and performing arts community, it was Dewar who listened to the arts sector's claims of unfair competition practices, accepted them as legitimate, and who laid plans to resolve problems. These included internal changes to the Department of Community Development and external changes to the municipal cultural grants program. Dewar also appointed a mayor's task force on culture to study the matter, identify strategies, and provide recommendations.⁴¹³

⁴¹² Nicole Zuger, *Leisure, Arts and Heritage Programs and Facilities Study: Municipal Arts and Heritage Profile* (City of Ottawa: Department of Community Services, 8 October 1999), p. 7.

⁴¹³ Public task forces were new to the municipal agenda, but Dewar was a practical leader. By creating alliances, not only could concerns be brought into the mainstream consciousness at City Hall, but also the resources and investigative opportunities of the mayor and councillors were improved tremendously. In 1979, there was less than one staff person per councillor and two for the mayor.

Arts facilities, always difficult to acquire in the city, received proper consideration.

Changes in the city's economy meant new and old guard alliances joined to capitalize on cultural tourism potential, especially through festivals. Politically, both the region and the city developed infrastructure and policies to match the increased size and complexity of the sector. Overall, the focus for the arts sector in Ottawa was the creation of a vibrant and living arts scene reflective of the people who lived in the city and called it home.

What was at stake was the essence of local artistic identity in a national capital setting.⁴¹⁴

These ideas – acceptance of the claim of legitimacy for arts sector support from local government; the revelation and solution of problems by the grassroots; the notion of culture as an engine for economic growth; and political changes to match sector achievements -- were considered radical by themselves, and the infrastructure to achieve them was not yet a feature of Ottawa's municipal government. Nonetheless, Dewar's reform council was a product of the times and according to Dewar's Chief of Staff, Robert Fox, Dewar and council simply maintained pressure until change happened.

Marion was the first of a new wave of councillors who were women that left jobs or lives as full-time community volunteers. Most of the councillors became full time. Traditionally, the city had staff; councillors didn't have staff. Councillors came to the meetings in the evenings and voted. To have community activists now who were there full-time really fundamentally changed who was on council, and what council represented. It meant that there was a whole phenomenon of activism and participation, and really revolutionary changes in how the municipal government was structured, and on assumptions of citizen participation and consultation.⁴¹⁵

There was a shift from the right to the left of the political spectrum.

⁴¹⁴ This was essentially the same struggle as creating a national cultural identity in an international setting.

⁴¹⁵ Robert Fox, (former Chief of Staff for Mayor Marion Dewar, 1979 – 1985), interview with author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 11 February 2004.

Marion was seen as being the “left” candidate, concerned about housing issues and transportation issues and quality-of-life issues. Her economic platform involved preserving the city and its quality-of-life, and support for the high tech sector. She recognized the need for a downtown and the strength of downtown, and understood the role the arts played in being downtown.⁴¹⁶

Dewar’s perspective was focused on creating a community environment. The traditional municipal bureaucracy didn’t know what to do about these ideas and in general, said Fox, city staff thought Dewar was wrong:

The city was about bricks and mortar – that it moves people around and gets water treated. Arts and culture was not the core business. [...] Even for those who did agree with cultural grants, there were economic arguments raised against these.⁴¹⁷

In the end, “there were difficulties [within the municipal bureaucracy] because there weren’t shared objectives between the traditional and the new.”

Her election occurred while dramatic changes were happening to the economic profile of the city. There was a sense of Ottawa being on the cusp of economic opportunities and risks. The federal government was decentralizing – bringing the government across the country – and there was a lot of doom and gloom about empty office space and concern about neighbourhoods being under threat. The development people wanted to re-develop neighbourhoods – pave paradise and put up high-rises, and there were really strong neighbourhood movements trying to resist that, trying to preserve the quality of downtown neighbourhoods.⁴¹⁸

While some regarded decentralization of the civil service as a major loss to Ottawa’s economy, Dewar saw it as a boon and a chance for new economic diversification of the region. Fox suggested that this change

coincided with and in some ways spawned the means through which Ottawa could diversify its economy with high tech industries in telecommunications, biotechnology and bioengineering. This was in the days of Northern Telecom and when Bell Canada built a lot of telephones right here in the city.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

⁴¹⁸ This refers to the Pinecrest, Centretown, Glebe, Lowertown, and Sandy Hill neighbourhood plans.

⁴¹⁹ Fox, interview.

With Dewar's left-leaning social agenda and the arrival of economic interests other than those of the federal government, the municipal agenda was poised to accommodate changes. For the local arts sector, the first of these occurred through the city's "miscellaneous" cultural grants system, and the second within the cultural recreation programs of the Department of Community Development.

Under Dewar, the arts grants system was enlarged and new groups funded that had hitherto been rejected.⁴²⁰ Perhaps the most surprising new recipient was the Ottawa Folk Arts Council (OFAC, est. 1967). In 1975, this group received \$500.00 and then city council revoked the funding: this was the only instance in city records of a repealed arts grant.⁴²¹ By 1979, perhaps as a measure of the changing social identity of the city, the OFAC received \$3,090.00 and in June of that year presented the first Homelands Festival at Lansdowne Park. The Festival featured music and dance from 30 different ethnic organizations, half of the 60 that were represented in the city of Ottawa at that time.⁴²²

Reform also occurred in the Department of Community Development. For decades, individual professional artists had provided teaching services for cultural recreation programs at facilities such as the Ottawa School of Art, the Ottawa Municipal Drama Centre, and community centres.⁴²³ The teachers were paid by course-based contracts. In June 1979, after 26 years of requests, the city's first long-term cultural

⁴²⁰ Recipients in 1979 were groups such as the Capital City Chorus (\$2,600.00); the University of Ottawa's *Espace Musique* (\$500.00); and the Capital Chordettes of Harmony Inc., (\$200.00), and others. The Festival of Spring (Tulip Festival) also received \$26,000.00, and a small portion of that was paid to artist performers and exhibitors.

⁴²¹ For further information see Ottawa, *By-Laws* No. 213-75 and No. 280-75.

⁴²² Southwarth, "Ottawa" in EMC 1005b.

⁴²³ Examples of professional artist teachers were Duncan de Kergommeaux, Jim Boyd, Victor Tolgyesy and Pat Durr, who worked at the OMAC and in city community centres. For further information about these programs and people, see Durr, pp. 31-32.

purchase-of-service agreement was concluded with the Ottawa School of Art (OSA, formerly known as the Ottawa Municipal Art Centre, founded 1953). For the 1979-1980 season the OSA was guaranteed annual funding of \$42,000.00. This new funding system was important to the long-term development of programs and staffing. The Ottawa School of Art was Eastern Ontario's only school for community-based, professional arts education between Montreal and Toronto, and the assurance of stability through an annual grant brought long-awaited relief.⁴²⁴

Within the municipality, other changes also occurred. By-laws were adapted to add busking licenses, and for the first time, arts poster signage was allowed at city kiosks, on public utility poles, and public notice boards. Partly in association with the city's ad hoc art acquisition program,⁴²⁵ public art began to appear more frequently in the city's public spaces.⁴²⁶ Other changes occurred as partnerships. With the Community Development Department as co-sponsor, the Federation of Musicians Trust Fund mostly paid for the July – August Summertown '80 activities, which featured local entertainment at the Sparks Street Mall. The Department also prepared a report on the Teachers' College's suitability as an arts centre, which was coordinated with a proposal for a municipal

⁴²⁴ These programs included sculpture, watercolour, drawing and painting, animation, clay modelling, life drawing, portraiture, and landscape painting. The next closest community art schools (excluding university or college programs) were in Montreal or Toronto. Jeff Stellick, (Executive Director, Ottawa School of Art), interview with author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario. 2 June 2004.

⁴²⁵ For example, on 16 May 1979 the Board of Control, Report No. 12 discussed acquisition of a Benjamin Chee Chee work depicting Ottawa City Hall and the Rideau Falls, for \$15,000.00, to add to the city art collection. The painting was owned by Nicholas Gallery of Ottawa. (Ojibwa artist Chee Chee had died tragically in an Ottawa jail on 11 March 1977).

⁴²⁶ Ottawa sculptor Victor Tolgyesy created some of Ottawa's first public art sculptures, including *The Acrobat's Rocking Horse* (1974), *McClintock's Dream* (1978) and *The Caravan of Life* (1979). These site-specific pieces were used to grace public spaces. Fox remembers: "One of the early examples was the commissioned *papier maché* work hanging from the ceiling of the market building, representing Ottawa Valley life with lumberjack and chickens and farmers' wives. *McClintock's Dream* was for Ottawa very concrete and real, and yet quite revolutionary." The market building also became home in February 1980 to SAW Gallery, SAW Video and CARO (the visual artists' copyright lobby group Canadian Artists' Representation – Ottawa local). From Fox, interview.

summer arts festival for 1981.⁴²⁷ Recommendations were made that Ottawa City Council allocate \$.25 per capita, and that the RMOC establish an annual allowance of \$1 per capita. This latter suggestion was in keeping with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities proposal of 1976, which established \$1.00 per capita as a minimal base for municipal cultural investment.⁴²⁸

In growing recognition of the volume and variety of work done by the arts sector, the Department of Community Development's "Cultural Section" was renamed "Visual and Performing Arts Section" and its staff prepared a sector handbook that outlined the level and type of municipal support available. In a June 1980 memo, Robert Bailey, Commissioner of Community Development, described this support as "resource development" and secondly as "direct programming."⁴²⁹ The resource development section discussed support systems that could be developed, such as provision of training in arts and crafts for recreation staff;⁴³⁰ the organization of arts sector workshops and sponsorships to build liaisons with the larger community;⁴³¹ bureaucratic assistance

⁴²⁷ On 13 May 1981, Ottawa City Council gave approval for the establishment of an Ottawa Summer Festival of the Arts, from 30 June to 18 July 1981, with municipal support not to exceed \$30,000.00, and that the festival be coordinated by the Community Development Department. Unfortunately, the time frame required to collaborate the event was too limited and the 1981 festival did not happen. Plans were begun for a festival to be held the following year, in October of 1982, in the abandoned Ottawa Teachers' College Building.

⁴²⁸ On 17 June 1976, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities suggested that "municipalities show their support for their cultural institutions by establishing and augmenting grants for this purpose with a goal of achieving a minimal annual expenditure of \$1.00 per capita [...] by request that provincial support reach \$2.00 per capita and federal support \$3.00 per capita, over the next three years. From Bailey, back of front cover.

⁴²⁹ OCA, Dewar, RG7-11-2, Box 89, C26/1a, File: Mayor Marion Dewar – Mayor's Advisory Committee on Arts and Culture, Arts and Culture Background Information File # 1, 19 June 1980. Memo from Robert Bailey, Commissioner of Community Development, to Recreation Branch staff.

⁴³⁰ According to Bailey, "...the training of part-time and full-time Recreation staff in relation to arts programs through skill development workshops and exposure to concepts and trends within the arts i.e. pottery workshops to demonstrate techniques in throwing and slip decoration aimed at technicians, instructors and students in community centre pottery studios." From OCA, Dewar, RG7-11-2, Box 89, C26/1a, File: Mayor Marion Dewar – Mayor's Advisory Committee on Arts and Culture.

⁴³¹ An example of this was the Ottawa-Carleton Cultural Council's workshop "Money, Money – Who's got the Money?" held on 29 March 1980.

regarding the annual grants process; and "...the Section is also considering the development of an arts council, a municipal arts policy and a newsletter in its future directions."⁴³² The programming section outlined collaborative programs between the municipality and the visual and performing arts community.⁴³³

One of the reform council's primary agendas was to empower the arts sector and this encouraged citizen participation as part of the democratic process. Fox remembered that

we wanted to get everyone's needs on the municipal agenda, and we wanted to be more participatory in that process. So we set up a mayor's advisory group on several different issues. Having said that, we proceeded to do it. One of them was there was a mayor's advisory group on the arts.⁴³⁴

⁴³² OCA, Dewar, RG7-11-2, Box 89, C26/1a, File: Mayor Marion Dewar – Mayor's Advisory Committee on Arts and Culture, Arts and Culture Background Information File # 1, 19 June 1980, memo from Commissioner Bailey.

⁴³³ Ibid., Memo (19 June 1980) from Bailey to Community Development staff:
"Direct Programming:

1. The City of Ottawa is involved in a purchase of service agreement with the *Ottawa School of Art*. The role of the Section is one of monitoring the agreement.
2. The Section is involved in purchasing the service of arts groups / individuals for the purpose of exhibition or demonstration i.e. the Section purchased the service of two (2) theatre companies and one (1) dance company to provide performances during the March Break.
3. The Section has applied for a summer grant to run a mobile theatre arts program that would provide a performance and workshop to children and youth.
4. The Section is involved in a variety of special events i.e. programming Ottawa Day at the 1980 Festival of Spring; co-ordinating the City Hall Exhibition of arts and crafts from community centre programs
5. The Section is also considering the initiation of theatre arts classes and a summer cultural day camp program for 1981.
6. The Section is involved in purchasing the service of arts groups / individuals for the purpose of exhibition or demonstration i.e. the Section purchased the service of two (2) theatre companies and one (1) dance company to provide performances during the March Break.
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8. The Section is involved in a variety of special events i.e. programming Ottawa Day at the 1980 Festival of Spring; co-ordinating the City Hall Exhibition of arts and crafts from community centre programs
9. The Section is also considering the initiation of theatre arts classes and a summer cultural day camp program for 1981." OCA, Dewar, RG7-11-2, Box 89, C26/1a, File: Mayor Marion Dewar – Mayor's Advisory Committee on Arts and Culture, Arts and Culture Background Information File # 1, 19 June 1980.

⁴³⁴ Fox, interview.

Discussion was followed by action, and on 1 April 1980 Mayor Dewar held a meeting to form the Mayor's Arts Advisory Group (MAG).⁴³⁵ This was an important event in the history of Ottawa because it marked the first time since 1955⁴³⁶ that the municipality had taken the lead and created an arts advisory coalition, charged with providing information and advice on the local cultural scene to City Hall.⁴³⁷ The fifteen volunteers of MAG identified six areas of concern for investigation, and set up a facilities committee,⁴³⁸ a funding committee,⁴³⁹ an arts council committee,⁴⁴⁰ a publicity committee,⁴⁴¹ a programming committee,⁴⁴² and a liaison committee.⁴⁴³ As Dewar's representative, Fox attended many of the MAG meetings.

⁴³⁵ Members of the Mayor's Advisory Group on the Arts (MAG) were: Arthur Milner (GCTC); Marcel Pronovost (Ottawa Folk Arts Council); Richard Nigro (past director of SAW Gallery); Suzanne Lemoyne (chairperson of the University of Ottawa's visual arts department, and creator of the Federal Art Bank); Jacques Jolicouer (Théâtre de la Corvée); Pat Durr (with CARO Canadian Artists Representation Ottawa); Judith Davies (artistic director of Ottawa Dance Theatre); Louise and Harvey Glatt (founder of Treble Clef Ltd.); Arthur McGregor (Ottawa Folklore Centre); Paul Cuellerrier (visual artist); Trudy Le Caine (NACO Association); Jane Panet (member of board of directors of GCTC); Tom Henighan (Carleton University English professor); and Laurent Filion (president of the Ottawa Film Society).

⁴³⁶ For similar reasons, the Ottawa Arts Council was formed in 1955.

⁴³⁷ OCA, Dewar, RG7-11-2 C26/1A, File: Arts and Culture Background Information #1.: Section 4: Cultural Section, Recreation Branch, Memo 29 April 1980, regarding a meeting with Brian Futterer and Cathy Parkinson (City staff) to discuss mandate and activities of Cultural Section of the Recreation Branch. "It was indicated that in 1978, the Cultural Section conducted a survey of 110 organizations seeking information on matters of concern. Because of staffing constraints only a preliminary collation of the data was undertaken, however it did indicate a general direction for City involvement. It had been the section's intention to call together a group of community representatives to review the results of the survey and recommend to the City an arts policy; however, the section did not pursue this course as MAG fulfilled such a function."

⁴³⁸ This sub-committee investigated facilities available for municipal use as administrative, storage, production, display and studio / performing space.

⁴³⁹ This sub-committee investigated the City of Ottawa grants; RMOC grants; and leveraging of municipal grants with other levels of government.

⁴⁴⁰ The Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation was also examining the need at this time for a "Regional Communications and Coordinating Body for the Arts Community of the Ottawa-Carleton District" (i.e. development of a community arts council). The arts council committee was charged to investigate arts councils' mandates, structures, and funding formulas.

⁴⁴¹ This sub-committee was to find means and ways of promoting and marketing the local arts groups' activities.

⁴⁴² This sub-committee was to investigate the City of Ottawa's art acquisition policy.

⁴⁴³ This sub-committee was to investigate relationships, and promote liaisons with municipal / local authorities such as other municipal recreation departments, library boards, boards of education, universities and colleges.

The group had a series of conversations, met regularly, and tried to do connecting among them, to do systemic thinking about the patterns of frustrations and what sorts of things might be possible. There was support from the Department of Community Development, which was the city's bridge to culture.⁴⁴⁴

To address the issues identified by the Department and by MAG, in May 1980 Mayor Dewar sent letters to fifteen Canadian mayors inquiring about their municipal cultural policy and arts programs.⁴⁴⁵ The move to support the arts was still a politically risky undertaking, and she needed support for her stance with information from the survey responses, as a barometer of what other municipalities offered to their cultural constituents. The letter included an attached questionnaire about funding, arts councils and facilities. Dewar wrote: "The City of Ottawa does not currently have an official arts policy to govern support to arts organizations and cultural activities. To assist in the development of such a policy I have established a Mayor's Advisory Group on Arts and Culture, which will be preparing recommendations for consideration this summer."⁴⁴⁶

The Mayor received eleven responses. Only one city, Vancouver, had a municipal arts policy, which was established in 1975. It also had the highest per capita funding (\$1.55) in the country. Responses from the other cities were varied. The City of Hamilton said it had "an overall policy covering the award of assistance to organizations in general, but no specific policy covering the arts. Consequently, artistic activities must

⁴⁴⁴ Fox, interview.

⁴⁴⁵ Mayor Dewar wrote to Mayor John Sewell (Toronto); Chairman Paul Godfrey (Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto); Mayor Mel Lastman (City of North York); Mayor G. Harris (Borough of Scarborough); Mayor Al Gleson (City of London); Chairman J. Campbell (Regional Municipality of Niagara); Mayor J.A. MacDonald (City of Hamilton); Mayor N. Tribovich (Sault St. Marie); Mayor Dusty Miller (City of Thunder Bay); Mayor K.A. Keyes (City of Kingston); Mayor Bill Norrie (City of Winnipeg); Mayor L.P. Schneider (City of Regina); Mayor Edmund Norris (City of Halifax); Mayor J.J. Volrich (City of Vancouver); and Mayor R. Alger (City of Calgary). From OCA, Dewar, RG7-11-2, Box 89, C26/1a, File: Mayor Marion Dewar – Mayor's Advisory Committee on Arts and Culture.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, example of a letter from Mayor Dewar to Mayor John Sewell on 21 May 1980.

take their chances together with certain social and recreational organizations....⁴⁴⁷ And from Kingston Mayor, Ken Keyes wrote:

I have reviewed with my treasurer the rather haphazard manner in which we provide funding to the arts in Kingston [...] it brings to view even more obviously than what one basically knows exists, and that is that we really have no appropriate policy upon which to base our funding of the arts, although it has long been talked of.⁴⁴⁸

The rest admitted to no provisioning, or, as a minimum, *ad hoc* monetary funding as needs arose, although a few municipalities had created local arts councils.⁴⁴⁹

Popular interest was on the rise for more cultural activities supported by the city, and for the creation of MAG, but there were some who objected to municipal involvement in cultural affairs. Some merchants complained to the city's Morality Officer about musicians busking on Sparks Street, which blocked foot traffic into their stores.⁴⁵⁰ There were also personal letters of complaint to the Mayor:

I am writing to protest this action. Just because some critic complained about the city not having a policy on culture, is no reason to go and form a committee on the subject. I can understand having welfare services and recreation services, but I fail to see the necessity of a cultural committee. The city has absolutely no business meddling in the culture of the city. It is a total waste of money. It makes the city council look as if they were trying to be with the cultural "in crowd". I cannot emphasize too strongly that this is not their place.⁴⁵¹

The Mayor's response was unequivocal in its arts support:

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., letter to Mayor Dewar from Mr. B.G. Smith, C.A., Director of Finance for the City Hall of Hamilton, on 27 May 1980.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid., letter to Mayor Dewar from Kingston Mayor Ken Keyes, on 19 June 1980.

⁴⁴⁹ The Calgary Allied Arts Council was created in 1946 and was Canada's first municipal arts council. For further information about its history and objectives, see: <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/massey/h5-315-f.html>. Accessed 13 August 2004.

⁴⁵⁰ From OCA, Dewar, RG7-11-2, Box 89, C26/1a, File: Mayor Marion Dewar – Mayor's Advisory Committee on Arts and Culture, letter from Mayor Dewar to Robert Fox, Legal Department. Busking *By-Law* 268-56.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., letter on 20 April 1980 to Mayor Dewar from Andrew Huntingdon, 74 Alymer Avenue, Ottawa, in protest against forming a city "cultural" committee.

The City of Ottawa does not currently have a policy on assistance to the arts, whether through grants, facilities or organizational support. This gap has been identified as a matter of concern not only to those interested directly in the arts but to others who were concerned that efforts be made to strengthen our local economy in the face of federal domination of cultural facilities. For this reason I identified in my Inaugural Address the need for such a group to consider the issues and make recommendations. I am confident that this group will produce some innovative and achievable recommendations that will boost our local cultural activities, thereby promoting tourism and our local economy, as well as contributing to the quality of life in our community...⁴⁵²

In September 1980, MAG presented its 39-page report to Mayor Dewar. As a courtesy, Dewar sent MAG copies to the Chairman of the NCC (Hon. C.M. Drury); the Director-General of NCC (Don McSween); the Chairman of the RMOC (Andy Haydon); and the Presidents of the University of Ottawa and Carleton University. Entitled *Proposals for Development of Arts and Culture in the Ottawa-Carleton Region: A Report for Mayor Marion Dewar prepared on behalf of the Mayor's Advisory Group on Arts and Culture*, it was important because it built on work done by the OCAA of 1963. As such, the MAG Report was the first modern and official summary and analysis of the local arts situation from resident artists' viewpoints. It covered six major areas of collaborative responsibility among the City and the RMOC and the artists' community, and recommended:

- a) the establishment of an Ottawa-Carleton Arts Council;
- b) that regional council provide regular funds for grants to local artists and groups, and that these funds be distributed on the recommendation of the Ottawa-Carleton Arts Council;
- c) that an Ottawa Centre for the Visual and Performing Arts be established (i.e. a municipal arts centre);
- d) that the City develop a policy for rental, acquisition, commissioning and recording of local artworks, such as 1% of all capital expenditures for art;

⁴⁵² Ibid., response to Huntingdon letter, from Mayor Dewar, on 14 May 1980.

- e) that the City facilitate the circulation of information about the arts (i.e. establishment of an information site that includes local and not only national events); and
- f) that an annual Summer Festival of the Arts, designed to showcase local talent, begin in 1981.⁴⁵³

In October 1980, City Council approved the MAG Report in principle on the advice of the Board of Control, and then forwarded it to the RMOC for further study. This was done against the advice of Mayor Dewar because it evaded resolution of the issues and delayed action while Council waited for the region to respond.

Media response to the report focused on the difficulties of the situation, and on 23 September 1980 the *Ottawa Citizen* newspaper argued:

Arts to cost taxpayers \$1.00! Ottawa-Carleton taxpayers will have to fork out \$1.00 each to support the arts, if recommendations made today by a city advisory committee are accepted. In addition, the committee asks for 1.25% of \$158 million dollar city budget – about \$198,000.00 a year – to be allocated to the arts [...] Performance and display space is in short supply in Ottawa, and the committee members hope a new theatre would alleviate the problem. They also hope the theatre would provide a small concert hall, which the city now lacks.

The reviewer knew about the NAC mandate to assist in the development of the local scene, and about its shortcomings.

Musicians are not fond of the NAC Studio, which was originally intended as a flexible theatre space. The Studio is also often unavailable because the NAC uses it as a rehearsal hall...⁴⁵⁴

General public response was more positive and many called the MAG Report a watershed event. On 7 October 1980 the Bytown Live Entertainment Association⁴⁵⁵ thanked Dewar and MAG for their efforts, and said that its organization lent its full

⁴⁵³ OCA, Dewar, RG7-11-2 C26/1a, File: Membership and MAG Arts and Culture Minutes, 23 September 1980.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ottawa Citizen*, 23 September 1980, p. 2.

⁴⁵⁵ Pierre Paul Lafrenière, former owner of Le Hibou, founded the Bytown Live Entertainment Association.

support: "We feel that Ottawa is one of the richest cultural centres in Canada and we regret that up until now the cultural community has received so little support...." This was followed the next day by praise from many others, including John Hobday, National Director of the Canadian Conference of the Arts (CCA), who endorsed the efforts.⁴⁵⁶

With action stalled at the RMOC, MAG pushed forward with its consultation schedule, and held its first public meeting in October 1980 at the Glebe Community Centre. Two hundred people attended the event, and issues discussed included: the use of surplus and vacant school facilities by the arts community; MAG support for the proposed Francophone Cultural Centre, still in the planning stages after four years; and the mandates, funding and infrastructure principles of the proposed Ottawa-Carleton Arts Council. The latter caused a great deal of debate, especially since some of the municipalities had already created their own local arts councils (e.g. Nepean Arts Council est. April 1979) and some saw an umbrella organization as redundant. Discussion revolved around the multiple elements that were intrinsic to arts council development, such as the proposed geographic mandate, funding powers, and peer jury review for funding applicants (both amateur and professional), establishment of arm's length principles, and the Council's relationship to the RMOC and its municipal member councils. No consensus occurred, and further public consultations were suggested.

On 13 March 1981, six months after Ottawa City Council passed the MAG Report, the RMOC Executive Committee responded. It decided:

- (a) the Region would not provide financial support for the establishment of an Ottawa-Carleton Arts Council as recommended in the MAG report;
- (b) no Regional capital expenditures would be provided for cultural facilities;

⁴⁵⁶ OCA, Dewar, RG7-11-2 C26/1a, File: Membership and MAG Arts and Culture Minutes.

- (c) no art acquisition policy was to be established;
- (d) that RMOC arts grant increases would occur gradually, on an annual basis; and
- (e) the RMOC would establish a Regional Cultural Advisory Group (to assess grant applications).⁴⁵⁷

In May 1981, Dewar met with MAG and despite generally disappointing news from the RMOC, the group decided to press forward. Later that year the MAG advisory group disbanded; their task was complete. It was up to others to implement the recommendations.

Parallel to these efforts, other groups in the city promoted artistic culture and were independent of municipal overview. The Ottawa-Carleton Cultural Council (OCCC, est. 1976) was interested in corporate arts sponsorship and cultural tourism ideas. These had been discussed with Mayor Dewar in 1980, after which they collaborated to create “Money, Money – Who’s Got the Money?”, one of Ottawa’s first cultural tourism conferences. This conference was held in March 1980 at the National Research Council (NRC) building on Sussex. Artists from the townships of Cumberland and Gloucester and the cities of Kanata, Nepean, Vanier and Ottawa invited their federal, provincial, regional and municipal government leaders, as well as officers of the Canada Council and the Canadian Conference of the Arts (CCA), to discuss four issues. They sought to: “increase public awareness of and participation in the visual and performing arts in the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton; encourage co-ordination, co-operation and communication in cultural activities in the region; assist the local arts groups in their

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., Memo on 13 March 1981 from J.H. Fraser, RMOC Regional Grants Officer to RMOC Councillor Marion Dewar.

development; and have the OCCC serve as a cultural liaison at the regional, provincial and national levels.”⁴⁵⁸ John Hobday, president of the Board of Directors of the CCA, gave the opening address, entitled “Funding in the 80s.” Lyle Blackwell, Executive Director of the Ottawa School of Art, spoke about “Major Fund Raising: A Case Study of the Ottawa School of Art.”⁴⁵⁹ The conference was well received and led to future meetings, organized by the OCCC and partners.

“Tourism: The Renewable Resource” was Ottawa’s second cultural tourism conference. It was hosted by the City of Ottawa and the NCC’s Canada’s Capital Visitors and Convention Bureau⁴⁶⁰ and held at the Chateau Laurier in January 1981. Participants came from federal cultural institutions (National Gallery of Canada, National Library, NAC, and museums), commercial entertainment establishments, hotel and advertising companies, and a few local arts organizations. They were reminded that affluent and sophisticated travellers needed more than one seasonal offering or one historic site to satisfy their cultural interests. They discussed how cultural tourism should work in Ottawa, and addressed the principles and practicalities of the situation.

Paul Cosgrove reiterated the 1976 NCC mandate that Ottawa was a “capital that stood as a symbol of identity, a model of unity and a source of pride and inspiration to all

⁴⁵⁸ OCA, Records of Mayor Marion Dewar, RG7-11-2, Box 89 C26/1a, independent, un-named file, 29 March 1980.

⁴⁵⁹ Several of the people who spoke at this meeting have remained long-term advocates for the arts. In January 2003, John Hobday was chosen as Director of the Canada Council. Another attendee, Keith Kelly, then Social Development Officer with Secretary of State, later became Executive Director of the Canadian Conference of the Arts (CCA), and in 1999 was appointed to the Canada Council.

⁴⁶⁰ Canada’s Capital Visitors’ and Convention Bureau was begun by the City of Ottawa. On 3 December 1973, Ottawa City Council asked the RMOC to assume responsibility for it, because, although the regional municipalities and the NCC received benefit from it, they did not share the financial burden of running the centre. The issue was brought forward to RMOC Council on 10 April 1974. From OCA, RMOC, *Minutes*, 10 April 1974, pp. 1017 – 1020.

Canadians.”⁴⁶¹ Chairman Keith Shirreffs of the Macdonald Club told the conference delegates that the arts (read national arts) were in a state of financial crisis, faced with spiralling costs and a reduction of government grants, and that they were looking for new avenues of financing.⁴⁶² In addition, from the cultural perspective, it was noted that the performing arts high season (fall-winter-spring) was generally tourism’s low season. Ottawa’s deficiencies from the tourist perspective were also outlined and included the lack of proper air links, no suitable conference centre, long winters, the perception of an institutionalized, government town with no lively activities, and restrictive Ontario liquor laws that discouraged arts and tourism and drove people across the river to Quebec for entertainment. Richard Carver of the National Library had perhaps the best understanding of the local situation and its difficulties in the national capital, when he suggested that Ottawa

... had only the national facilities [...] There were no venture capitalists that sought to have their names emblazoned on performance halls, and there was no municipal middle ground for the arts facility option.⁴⁶³

Carver also thought the media could do more to promote the region’s cultural activity.⁴⁶⁴

One area of debate and conflict revolved around publicity and advertising. The federal Canada’s Capital Visitors and Convention Bureau’s publication “See and Do” wanted information from Ottawa’s municipal arts groups for inclusion in its promotional material, but the Bureau’s timeline for typesetting and design was unrealistic for the

⁴⁶¹ OCA, Dewar, RG7-11-1 C26-1a, File: Tourism, 16 January 1981. Speech given by Paul Cosgrove, Minister of Public Works. Cosgrove was also responsible for the NCC.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, *Tourism: The Renewable Resource*, sponsored by Canada’s Capital Visitors and Convention Bureau, in cooperation with the City of Ottawa, was held at the Chateau Laurier, Ottawa on 16 January 1981.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.* Speech given by Richard Carver of the National Library, p. 59.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 58–65.

resident sector as it was determined months or even years ahead. For the local arts groups, the lack of municipal infrastructure in terms of performance or gallery space meant more logistical difficulties with site procurement and negotiation, as well as securing other basic resources such as funding and personnel. The Bureau did not recognize the hand-to-mouth reality of the local arts sector's working conditions, and expected its products to match the quality of those produced by the nationally funded institutions.

Ray Desjardins of the Canadian Government Office of Tourism admonished the local sector and advised them to tell the (federal) publicists: "what's the product; price, where, how do you market it; are you ready to package; are you ready to come up with a net price; are you ready to tell me now what you're going to be doing a year and a half from now?"⁴⁶⁵ The local arts sector realized from these discussions that not only was it discredited as irrelevant in the face of the national capital federal cultural competition, but that it was also blamed for its low political status.

In an attempt to resolve the issues raised at the conference, in February 1981 the OCCC hosted a private conference at the NRC on the theme "Arts – Everybody's Business." It was held for elected municipal and federal representatives, as well as local arts practitioners, and featured David Silcox, Director of Cultural Affairs, Metropolitan Toronto and Walter Pitman, Executive Director, Ontario Arts Council, as speakers. A repeat presentation was held one month later for the general public, but once again, federal cultural organizations were the primary representatives and local sector invitees were few.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 60.

While the Department of Community Development was organizing in-house improvements, while the MAG was volunteering its time and expertise to lay a future path for the sector, and while “national-level” tourism efforts were underway through private and government discussions, Mayor Dewar decided to hold a Public Study Session on the Arts, in order to improve the municipal sector’s visibility. Throughout the summer of 1981, Dewar worked hard on the arts sector’s behalf. She lobbied the various sectors that held direct or indirect influence over the development of the local cultural scene: the federal Public Service Commission, the NCC, the National Gallery of Canada, the NAC and the national museums, the provincial Ontario Ministry for Culture and Recreation, the Ontario Arts Council (OAC), the municipal and RMOC governments, artist and other unions, the local boards of education, and media and business representatives. All were invited to the Whitton Hall session at City Hall on 18 September 1981.⁴⁶⁶

Hundreds attended, and five principal agenda items were tabled for discussion: schools as community centre sites; municipal arts facilities; funding; the establishment of an arts council; and publicity.⁴⁶⁷ Public and Catholic schools’ representatives agreed to the continued use of their educational facilities for local arts groups. The facilities discussion focused on the benefits and drawbacks of the Teachers’ College, vacant since 1974, as a municipal arts facility site. The funding discussion revolved around the role of the artist in society and did not discuss practicalities. David Silcox of Toronto explained

⁴⁶⁶ OCA, Dewar, RG7-11-2 C26/1a, File: Membership and MAG Arts and Culture Minutes. June 24, August 11, August 18, August 21 memos from Mayor Dewar.

⁴⁶⁷ Some or all of these items were discussed in the MAG agenda of September 1980; the Ottawa-Carleton Arts Coalition recommendations of 1978; the National Capital Arts Alliance complaints of 1963; the Ottawa Arts Council’s suggestions of 1955; the Ottawa Municipal Arts Centre proposals of 1953; and the Ottawa Recreation Association programs of 1946.

best practices of an arts council, and the arts council discussion centred on the important issue of whether or not the council should be a grants funding body. Publicity, hidden under the guise of tourism, was exposed as favouring the promotion of the national cultural offerings rather than the local arts sector.⁴⁶⁸

Media response to the “Public Study Session on the Arts” repeated this communication theme. Ottawa *Citizen* reporter Jim Slotek quoted Les McIlroy, Canada’s Capital Visitor and Convention Bureau’s executive vice-president, who lashed out and condemned not only local arts sector artists but also those who worked in national cultural institutions. Following the admonishments received during the January 1981 tourism conference, McIlroy’s comments had a familiar ring:

[McIlroy] accused Ottawa’s arts community Friday [...] of isolating itself from audiences and failing to help promote the city’s tourism industry. McIlroy told a public study session on the arts at city hall that the depressed economy will soon “force people to adopt an attitude of selling the entire city as a package - a theme park.”

Such a drive, McIlroy said, would require the co-operation of all tourist attractions – including the arts.

It’s time you people in the arts community got off your stages and talked to people. You seem to take the attitude of “I’ll mingle with the community when it suits my interest, but don’t dirty my leotards with money unless you want to give it to me.”⁴⁶⁹

McIlroy’s comments indicated the extent to which Ottawa’s entire arts community had to bolster its public relations and mend the division between public perception and reality.

But the reality was that the lack of space for local arts organizations in Ottawa was an impediment that created many other problems. The MAG facility study of

⁴⁶⁸ OCA, Dewar, RG7-11-1 C26-1a: File: Arts in Ottawa – Carleton Region Public Study, 18 September 1981.

⁴⁶⁹ Jim Slotek, “Ottawa arts community comes under fire during study session”, *Ottawa Citizen*, 19 or 20 September 1981, page unknown.

September 1980 was followed by an in-house municipal study in August 1981. This report indicated similar findings to MAG - that there were few buildings available for theatrical or visual and performing arts' uses. Some were the NCC-owned buildings, a provincially owned Daly Avenue Provincial Court House building, and the roof amphitheatre of the Rideau Centre.⁴⁷⁰ A third city report in January 1982 examined existing theatre facilities in Ottawa, and found their availability for external use severely limited by their owners' own needs. There were two University of Ottawa theatre spaces in the 100 – 400 seat range, one 466-seat theatre at Carleton University; one theatre with 945-seats at the Ottawa Technical High School, 1,100-seats at the High School of Commerce, and the *Académie-de-la-Salle* High School had 745-seats. In addition, the francophone community was considering developing a 250-seat theatre as part of *École Guigues* Francophone Cultural Centre. An NCC-owned building in the market area in which Theatre 2000 produced its plays seated 100,⁴⁷¹ and additional capacity was found in the basements and empty classrooms of abandoned urban elementary schools.

Local school boards had long been aware of the city's arts facility problems and in 1971 the Ottawa Roman Catholic Separate School Board established an Artist-in-Residence Program to help ameliorate the situation. Ottawa artists quickly claimed all available space, and by 1981 the program had expanded to include

... thirty-six artists in residence in 17 schools, with painters, sculptors, potters, ceramists, weavers, filmmakers, printmakers, and etchers. It also had a studio, jury, lecture and library space for the 200-member Ottawa Art Association, the 60-member Potters Guild, and several different theatre groups.⁴⁷²

⁴⁷⁰ OCA, Dewar, RG7-11-2 C26/1a, 11 January 1982.

⁴⁷¹ OCA, Ottawa, *Minutes*, 20 January 1982.

⁴⁷² Letter from G.N. Conway, Co-ordinator English Language Curriculum Department, Ottawa Roman Catholic Separate School Board, to Mayor Dewar. OCA, Dewar, RG7-11-2 C26/1a, File: Arts and Culture Background Information #1, n.d.

Penguin Theatre was one of the latter, and its theatre consisted of the basement of Canadian Martyr's School, with room for an audience of 50 adults or 70 children. For four years the company worked in this modest environment and expanded its trade by touring in Eastern Ontario and Western Quebec. By 1980, its reputation was solid and it was ready to expand but the company had difficulty finding a suitable facility. The Penguin Theatre wanted to be seen as the local equivalent of the NAC Theatre, with space in a downtown location to support that vision. But there were difficulties.

During the 1960s and 1970s, many downtown cores in North America emptied as the population moved to the suburbs. Urban artists moved in and converted abandoned downtown spaces such as warehouses and old schools into arts production and performance spaces. As a result, entertainment districts blossomed in formerly derelict areas and new types of small businesses developed around the arts centres. Over time, gentrification occurred and downtown cores revitalized. Tourists came, and downtown hotels were revived.

Until the mid-1970s, Ottawa's artistic epicentre was in the downtown and market areas. The sector had to compete with national cultural fare from Parliament Hill, the NAC, the National Gallery of Art and the national museums, but still, it made independent headway, as evidenced by the Theatre Aquarius, Theatre 2000, Le Hibou and SAW Gallery. However, in the government's plans to encircle Parliament Hill with federal property on both sides of the Ottawa River and create a national capital "crown jewel" vista, the Department of Public Works and the NCC purchased or expropriated many of Ottawa's downtown properties. According to Penguin, this led to a situation

... where unlike the larger centres like Toronto and Montreal, Ottawa is unique in that there is a serious lack of viable space for the performing arts. [...] Inner core [or downtown] space, with pressure from both the federal government and a burgeoning entrepreneurial sector, is, for all intents and purposes, untouchable. No theatre group can compete for the available real estate.

Penguin set its sights on the NCC-owned York Street Theatre building,⁴⁷³ and approached the NCC landlord, stressing the unusual nature of the problem.

Aside from the NAC, with its special national mandate, and facilities second to none, there are only two small performing spaces for professional alternative theatre. Neither of these two existing facilities meets the current economic requirements. Theatre rental space is also inadequate at the moment, belonging, for the most part, to universities that necessarily have their own agendas and only rent their facilities on an infrequent basis.⁴⁷⁴

Theatre director Eleanor Crowder remembered that

... the theatre was considered the nicest in town next to the NAC, and Penguin [wanted to go] into production at York Street with the attitude that we are the local theatre that competes with the NAC – we are the regional theatre.

After protracted negotiations involving corporate donor financing and assistance from the City of Ottawa, the NCC agreed to lease its York Street Theatre to Penguin. The RMOC did not assist the company with capital funds because, according to Crowder, it “had a different take. The RMOC had an idea about standards, and used the NAC as the model. If the group was not of that calibre then it was not interested.”⁴⁷⁵

The NCC rents were high, and in order to meet costs, Penguin offered to sub-let

⁴⁷³ According to NCC Heritage Inventory records, the 18 York Street building was erected in 1876, by *Institut Canadien-Français d'Ottawa*. In 1882, the Royal Society of Canada was founded there. In 1887, the Royal Theatre presented plays, but following a fire, all the organizations left and in 1890, it became a pork-packing factory. In 1926, it became the Chateau Cheese Company. In 1970, a fire ravaged the building and it was offered to the Ottawa Little Theatre, which had just lost its own building in a fire. But the OLT declined the offer, and the NCC, after considerable debate, left the façade and built a modern building behind. Theatre 2000 played there after 1975, and the Penguin Theatre moved in, in 1981.

⁴⁷⁴ OCA, Dewar, RG7-11-7, C26/41, Box 101, Penguin Theatre Company Fundraising File, September 1981.

⁴⁷⁵ Crowder, interview.

the facilities when on tour. The Ottawa-based Theatre Ballet of Canada, one of Canada's premier contemporary dance companies, appreciated the gesture.⁴⁷⁶ Theatre Ballet General Manager, Gordon Pearson, underscored the need for arts buildings.

There is a serious shortage in Ottawa of professionally equipped theatre space suitable for ballet and modern dance. Consequently, I expect that the opening of this facility will be welcomed enthusiastically by the Ottawa dance community and small touring dance companies from across Canada.⁴⁷⁷

At that time, Theatre Ballet was housed in the first floor of the Sun Life Office Tower on Bank Street near Queen, an unsuitable space but the only one that its corporate donor had to offer.

The Great Canadian Theatre Company (GCTC) also suffered from inadequate housing conditions. From 1975 to 1982, it performed from two sites: in the basement of the Ottawa South Fire Hall, and in Theatre A at Carleton University. But it could not reserve either for the long runs needed in order to make a profit for the company. By 1981, the GCTC had produced over thirty main stage shows and eight regional tours, and had survived with offices in one place, storage in a second, construction in a third, and performances in a fourth. Renting a facility was not a viable economic option because the demand was higher than the available supply in Ottawa.

In 1981, the receipt of an unexpected Canada Council grant and the realization that the grant would cover almost a year in rent prompted the GCTC to consider purchasing a facility and search for a building where the mortgage payments would be equal to the rent payments. A real estate agent was dubious whether they would find

⁴⁷⁶ Hodgins, interview. "Theatre Ballet of Canada was a combination of two professional ballet companies: one from Montreal and one from Toronto. They amalgamated to form the new Ottawa company."

⁴⁷⁷ OCA, Dewar, RG7-11-7, C26/41, Box 101, Penguin Theatre Company Fundraising File, September 1981. Letter from Gordon Pearson, General Manager, Theatre Ballet of Canada, to Maureen Labonté, Artistic Director, Penguin Theatre Company, 10 July 1981. The underscore is theirs.

anything, but suggested that a large down payment would lower the mortgage payments. A possible site was found in a truck repair garage that had high ceilings (necessary for staging and audience seating). GCTC petitioned City Hall for immediate capital grant funds and with Dewar's influence, Ottawa City Council approved the request on 20 January 1982. The GCTC purchased the garage on Gladstone Avenue with city funding as well as money from its fundraising efforts, and opened its new theatre in September 1982.⁴⁷⁸

For the others in the arts community, the large Teachers' College building on Elgin Street remained a tantalizing option that would satisfy many needs. In January 1982, City Council Minutes noted that there were twelve amateur and four professional theatre companies operating within the City of Ottawa (excluding the NAC). The GCTC, Theatre 2000, Theatre Young, Savoy Society, *Théâtre de la Corvée*, and *Théâtre du Cabano* had all requested space from the municipality over the previous two and a half years, arguing that they required permanent spaces and places for the same reasons the GCTC had cited - a *centre* was needed to secure their subscriber audience and stimulate the continuing professional development that was associated with a permanent residence. At the time, only Lakeside Theatre Productions (LTP) was supported through the Department of Community Development, and it worked from the 150-year old farmhouse that was the Ottawa Municipal Drama Centre.

As for the Teachers' College, Fox remembered how enticing the downtown site was for artists.

A lot of our time as the mayor's staff and as MAG was taken with the thought that we needed to have a performing arts centre and gallery space. There were

⁴⁷⁸ Milner, interview.

different buildings considered, different needs that we had identified, but the lure of the Teacher's College was irresistible – it was such a splendid building, because all of sudden the two storey clapboard, temporary military buildings that were on Cartier Square had been taken down, and it was no longer hemmed in and people saw this building in a totally new and different way [...] suddenly there was this incredible vista.

Unfortunately, the building had been left to rot since the Department of Education had moved its program to the University of Ottawa in 1974. Fox recounted that the College

... had been abandoned and had pigeons roosting in it, but it had space for studios, space for workshops, space for performances, and space for galleries. While we continued on a multi-pronged policy for a building, this really took all our attention. We hired architects to do some designs [...] and we did some serious lobbying because we needed some federal money if we were going to land that building.⁴⁷⁹

To evaluate its potential, Mayor Dewar held a one-day fête there on 2 October 1982 and Celebration Arts Ottawa was an instant success, with dozens of local groups performing for an audience of several hundred. The popular acceptance of this festival led to the creation of the Council for the Arts in Ottawa (CAO) to serve as the organization responsible for planning future festivals.⁴⁸⁰ Both the festival and the council evolved from the six major recommendations made in the September 1980 MAG report. Four more recommendations - regional and local arts funding programs,⁴⁸¹ improved local publicity,⁴⁸² a public art program by the Visual Arts Centre Advisory Committee

⁴⁷⁹ Fox, interview.

⁴⁸⁰ The Council for the Arts in Ottawa (hereafter CAO) was established in October 1982. Its role was to act as an official advocate and liaison between artists' groups and individual artists and the City of Ottawa, and was a not-for-profit, charitable organization, funded in an arms-length relationship by the city. Volunteers administered the CAO, and the Board hired one paid executive director, to maintain operations.

⁴⁸¹ Funding for local arts programs for the City of Ottawa began for the OMAC in 1953 and was now a standing item in Ottawa's annual budget review. The RMO initiated arts funding in 1974 at the request of the NAC; in 1978 other local arts groups also began to receive regional grants.

⁴⁸² The arts information number was established on 25 February 1981, when Ottawa installed a recorded info-line of arts events, called 237-ARTS, at a cost of \$4,773.60. From OCA, Dewar, RG7-11-2 C26/1a, File: Membership and MAG Arts and Culture Minutes. Memo from R. Bailey, Commissioner of Community Development, to Mayor Dewar, on 25 February 1981.

(VACAC),⁴⁸³ and establishment of a municipal arts centre⁴⁸⁴ - were all underway by the end of 1982.

Around the same time, the volunteer Ottawa Arts Centre Foundation (OACF) was formed to find a building that would be suitable as a municipal arts facility. To aid this, in 1983 the City of Ottawa established an Arts Capital Grants program to assist arts groups trying to establish theatres, galleries and concert halls.⁴⁸⁵

The City's Arts Capital Grants Policy assists groups that are purchasing, renovating or building a facility, purchasing fixed equipment, or obtaining a long-term lease on a building. The policy allows arts groups to apply for grants of up to 50% of the capital costs for projects under \$5,000.00, and up to 25% for larger capital projects. The program does not provide assistance for groups leasing facilities on the short term.⁴⁸⁶

In 1984, the OACF was provided with annual city funding to hire permanent staff.⁴⁸⁷ By 1985, it was obvious that the City of Ottawa Arts Capital Grants Policy did not meet the needs of artists or arts organizations such as the OACF, and the policy was amended because arts groups "did not have the funds to pay for even 50% of capital projects. Few groups could purchase; most leased facilities on a short-term basis."⁴⁸⁸ Within that program, the CAO and the OACF pursued the idea of the Teachers' College as a site, although it was almost a lost cause, not only because it would be difficult to raise 50% of

⁴⁸³ The Visual Arts Centre Advisory Committee (hereafter VACAC) began in June 1975 following the Visual Art Exhibition No. 1. In 1982 it was requested to prepare a report detailing the role that the City should be in improving the status of visual artists in Ottawa.

⁴⁸⁴ In October 1982 the volunteer Ottawa Arts Centre Foundation (OACF) was formally established, to carry on the search for a municipal arts centre.

⁴⁸⁵ The model for this policy formed when the GCTC applied to the City in 1981 for capital assistance, regarding the purchase of the truck garage as their future theatre.

⁴⁸⁶ OCA, Ottawa, *Minutes*, 2 December 1987, p. 1-125.

⁴⁸⁷ Zuger, p. 7.

⁴⁸⁸ OCA, Ottawa, *Minutes*, 2 December 1987, p. 1-125.

the capital funds, but because "they had a countervailing force at that time that was Regional Chairman Andrew Haydon, who wanted that building for regional headquarters."⁴⁸⁹

Despite strong interest by Haydon and the RMOC in the Teachers' College building and site, throughout 1985 the CAO and the OACF continued to lobby for at least its occasional use. They suggested:

... spaces in the renovated existing buildings, which would have only occasional RMOC use, could be made available for arts activities and other public uses. Events for various groups such as art displays and demonstrations, lectures, recitals, concerts, meetings, receptions, etc. could be carried out in space for major periods of each month; that facilities for smaller theatre groups could also be incorporated without a major increase in expenditure; that all events would be in one location; and activities would include production and production facilities for art of all forms.

Critics of this idea, such as Prof. Tibor Egervari of the University of Ottawa theatre department, felt that the costs of renovation were a major factor against the artists' groups' use of the building. He also suggested

... the idea of art [that the local artists envisioned] was a kind of apple pie and motherhood issue. [But the artists were] not foreseeing what they were doing, what kind of audiences they were addressing, or how they were going to continue. There was no definite plan.⁴⁹⁰

The RMOC was equally dubious about the arts community's long term vision, and, more importantly, how they were going to achieve and maintain it. In a June 1985 response, the RMOC stated:

It would seem questionable whether these activities could be accommodated compatibly with the activities of the RMOC in the renovated building. The Foundation desires also a theatre to seat 1000. The accommodation of such a facility would entail a significant increase in capital expenditure. The Director

⁴⁸⁹ Fox, interview.

⁴⁹⁰ Tibor Egervari, (retired professor, University of Ottawa theatre department), interview with author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 21 December 2004.

was less than enthusiastic about the prospect of dispersing the Foundation's activities and also by being limited to shared (only partially available) space.⁴⁹¹

With this, hopes for the Teachers' College dimmed, and then died. The CAO and the OACF turned their energies towards other Ottawa real estate options.

While the hunt for a permanent site continued, those activities that required only tents and talent in temporary doses became *de rigueur* in the city. The one-day Celebration Arts Festival in October 1982 fell into this category, as did the arts festival of 1983. In 1984, Celebration Arts was renamed the Ottawa Festival of the Arts. By 1985, it was a bold and brassy weeklong blitz with hundreds of local performance and exhibition activities entertaining thousands of residents and tourists, and its great popular success was a surprise to everyone.

Susan Annis, President of the Council for the Arts in Ottawa (CAO), Ottawa's arts council, suggested to the Regional Grants Officer that the festival's greatest value was the unleashing of skilled amateur potential.

The activities of the week injected great energy and enthusiasm into the arts community and gave it a feeling of working together, often discipline beside discipline, and provided an excellent overview of the arts in the Ottawa-Carleton Region.⁴⁹²

Approval was also voiced from the corporate sector, which benefited from the economic spin-off effects of the festival. Increased revenues were noted by businesses such as restaurants, hotels, souvenir shops, taxi services, and local artist entrepreneurs who realized the festival resulted in new performance bookings and sales of *objet d'art*.

⁴⁹¹ OCA, Dewar, RG7-11-7 C26/4d, Marion Dewar Reports 1985, Box 104. "Summary of Investigations – Teachers College Site, Accommodation of Arts and Other Public Activities." *Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton New Headquarters Building: Site Feasibility Report* 19 June 1985, p. 2.

⁴⁹² Letter from Susan Annis, President of the Council for the Arts in Ottawa, to Ann Thérèse MacEachern, Regional Grants Officer, on 24 September 1985.

Although it was neither the first nor the largest of Ottawa's local arts festivals (the Lakeside Festival of the Arts series of the late 1950s and early 1960s were two-month ventures), the 1980s festival was different and important because it was the first that was organized by the local arts sector itself. Despite unusual federal competition, as well as a lack of civic infrastructure for its local cultural development, the sector had grown substantially in size and maturity and proved it could successfully accomplish such a complex task.

But with success came difficulties. The festival's temporary nature generated a multitude of labour and economic problems that the volunteer CAO could identify but not resolve without outside assistance. In October 1982, when the CAO accepted the role as the festival's main organizer, the festival was a one-day fête. By 1985, it had grown to a weeklong affair. The CAO continued to coordinate all activities in organizing and training, and nurtured volunteers to complete the tasks identified by the CAO. These included booking festival sites, scheduling performers and performances, arranging artisan and visual art displays, promoting and marketing the festival, networking with the hotels and tour companies, forming relations with media, maintaining proper financial accounts, applying for grants, dealing with complaints, contracting out that which could not be undertaken by the board (such as electrical, lighting, security, and plumbing needs), and working with the municipal government to accommodate the festival's changing needs.

However, the festival required more than the goodwill of volunteers to remain viable. The need for a festival infrastructure was apparent; the means to acquire it was not. To ensure future success, a long-term business plan was required, but that was

impossible without the assurance of basic levels of civic support and funding. However, these elements were not yet a feature of the municipal administration system and despite the evidence of social and commercial value, the festival remained on an ad hoc funding and support basis, subject to an annual application process. This did not meet the festival's needs, and the CAO turned to the business and regional government for additional support. The business community was not forthcoming. In return for a corporate donation, the business sector could receive either luxuriously appointed seats at the federal NAC or hard church pews or school auditorium seats at local events; this was a contest the local artists could not win. While the position of the business community was straightforward, the role of the RMOC *vis à vis* the local arts sector was more complex.

Repertoire issues, and conflict-of-interest issues, arose. The RMOC persistently denied any funding to the festival because "recreation is not within the purview of the region, and such activities are not eligible for support."⁴⁹³ The activities they supported were those of the NAC, and professional and semi-professional groups. As mentioned, in the years between 1974 and 1985 (the end of Dewar's term), the RMOC arts advisory board granted a dozen local organizations a total of \$1,092,480.00.⁴⁹⁴ The single,

⁴⁹³ OCA, RMOC, *Minutes*, 29 May 1984 Annex, found in 12 September 1984 Report, pp. 3482 - 3485

⁴⁹⁴ The following 1978 – 1980 examples depict the RMOC's arts granting program:

OCA, RMOC, *Minutes*, 27 September 1978, pp. 3742 – 3745. RMOC Arts Budget Allocations: National Arts Centre (\$127,375.00); Great Canadian Theatre Company (\$1,870.00); Le Groupe de la Place Royale (\$12,325.00); Ottawa Dance Theatre (\$13,175.00); Portable Theatre (\$1,870.00); SAW Gallery Inc. (\$6,205.00); Penguin Performance Company (\$6,630.00); and Thirteen Strings (\$500.00).

OCA, RMOC, *Minutes*, 27 June 1979, pp. 2183 – 2186. 1979 RMOC Arts Budget Allocations: NAC (\$140,000.00); Le Groupe de la Place Royale (\$10,000.00); Ottawa Dance Theatre (\$9,000.00); Penguin Performance Company (\$6,600.00); SAW Gallery Inc. (\$6,000.00); Ottawa Symphony Orchestra (\$2,500.00); GCTC (\$2,500.00); Ottawa Choral Society (\$1,500.00); Canadian Centennial Choir (\$1,300.00); and Theatre 2000 (\$1,000.00).

federally funded NAC received nearly twice that amount, at \$2,043,080.00.⁴⁹⁵ The reason for this could be attributable to a conflict-of-interest situation: local officials of the regional and municipal governments held ex-officio NAC board positions, and volunteers who sat on the RMOC Grants Advisory Board also sat on the NAC Board and voted in its favour.⁴⁹⁶

The level of funding support received by the NAC was a puzzle to those who did not sit on both boards; they questioned the RMOC's judgement and demanded the NAC justify its claims. In response, NAC Director General Donald J.A. MacSween presented *The National Arts Centre and the Community 1981 - 1982: A Report to the Cultural Grants Advisory Committee of the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton*. In it, he described the evolution of the relationship of the NAC with Ottawa, from the 1963 founding of the National Capital Arts Alliance and the donation of land by the city for the national arts centre, to its history of interactions with the local arts community. It argued that the audience was well served:

While the Centre operates with a "national" mandate, because it is physically located in Ottawa, its benefits, as far as the public is concerned, accrue for the most part to the residents of the National Capital Region. It is not inappropriate therefore for this public, through the appropriate municipal governmental authority, to participate financially in supporting the Centre. In all major Canadian municipalities, the residents support the arts through their municipal governments. So do the residents of the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton.

OCA, RMOC, *Minutes*, 9 April 1980, p. 1433, p. 1435. RMOC Arts Budget Allocations: NAC (\$162,000.00); Le Groupe (\$28,000.00); Nepean Symphony Orchestra (\$10,000.00); SAW Gallery (\$7,000); Ottawa Dance Theatre (\$7,000.00); GCTC (\$7,000.00); Penguin Performance Co. (\$4,000.00 plus \$4,000.00 in reserve); Ottawa Symphony Orchestra (\$4,000.00); Theatre 2000 (\$3,000.00); Canadian Film Group (\$2,500.00); Theatre Young Company (\$1,500.00); Ottawa Choral Society (\$1,500.00); Canadian Centennial Choir (\$850.00); and Thirteen Strings (\$500.00).

⁴⁹⁵ \$139,000.00 in 1974; \$100,000.00 in 1975; \$100,000.00 in 1976; \$165,000.00 in 1977; \$127,375.00 in 1978; \$135,000.00 in 1979; \$162,000.00 in 1980; \$165,000.00 in 1981; \$217,455.00 in 1982; \$230,000.00 in 1983; \$245,000.00 in 1984; and \$257,250.00 in 1985. From the National Arts Centre Annual Reports 1974 - 1985.

⁴⁹⁶ For a cross-reference list, compare the RMOC Arts Advisory Committee with members of the NAC Board.

The NAC staff also supplied expertise, he argued.

Artists, technical and administrative personnel employed at the Centre are deeply involved, on a voluntary basis, in professional and amateur performing arts organizations in the region. The impact of such participation and the scope of the contribution of the Centre to this community is incalculable, both as a matter of mathematics and in terms of size. The Centre, built and operated by the taxpayers of Canada has had an extraordinary impact on the cultural life and opportunities of the residents of this region of our country.

MacSween further suggested that benefits also accrued to the local performing arts community. His summary concluded:

The Centre continues to be a major resource for professional, amateur, university and school performing arts organization in the region. Among other examples, it provides direct loans of props, instruments, costumes, sets, technical equipment, stage equipment, materials, as well as professional advice on every aspect of the performing arts. Furthermore, it provides educational performances, tours, career counselling, and performances at little or no cost to residents of the region; it provides career opportunities for performing artists in the region from apprenticeships to professional engagements with the various ensembles resident at the Centre, or in solo performance.⁴⁹⁷

Selected letters of appreciation from the School of Dance, University of Ottawa Drama Guild, Sock n'Buskin at Carleton, *Le théâtre de l'île*, the Penguin Theatre Company, Ottawa Symphony Orchestra, and other not-for-profit local companies, accompanied the report.⁴⁹⁸ There was no discussion of what local arts organizations could have done with the two million.

In 1983, the year when the Celebration Arts Festival began to request funding from the RMOC, it competed against 51 other local arts applicants. That year, 31 arts organizations received \$230,000.00 and the NAC received \$221,430 (51% and 49% of

⁴⁹⁷ OCA, Dewar, RG 7 – 11 – 2, Box 89, C26/1a, February 1982. File: *The National Arts Centre and the Community 1981 – 1982: A Report to the Cultural Grants Advisory Committee of the Regional Municipality of Ottawa Carleton*. Letter from Donald J.A. MacSween, NAC Director General, to Mrs. T. Kehoc, Chairman, Cultural Grants Advisory Committee, RMOC regarding the NAC's involvement with region.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid.

the total available funds, respectively).⁴⁹⁹ In 1984, the RMOC received 56 applications: 38 applicants received \$275,850 and the NAC received \$245,000.00 (53% and 47% of total available funds, respectively).⁵⁰⁰ In 1985, \$575,000.00 was allocated to 40 arts groups out of 52 applicants (including the NAC) requesting over \$1 million: 51 groups received \$317,750.00 and the NAC received \$257,250.00 (55.3% and 44.7% of total available funds, respectively).⁵⁰¹

Dissension about this state of affairs continued. The RMOC Arts Advisory Board tried to show that it was doing the best it could for the community and announced the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' 1976 resolution of \$1.00 per capita for arts funding had been achieved in Ottawa by 1985. However, critics pointed out that it was a false reading because the per capita was only \$.55 for resident arts groups, and \$.45 for the NAC.⁵⁰² As a strong contender for regional funds, the strength of the NAC lobby diminished the sector's protests and the performers (dancers, actors and musicians) found it difficult to organize politically to achieve common goals. Protests, taken individually, did not make a difference.

For the visual artists, difficulties were less profound. Since 1880, when the National Gallery of Art was founded, Ottawa had had a series of art schools and art associations that centred on the community. A century later, the discipline was well-established, with the University of Ottawa, Carleton University, Algonquin College and the Ottawa School of Art offering programs in studio work and art history, for both

⁴⁹⁹ OCA, RMOC, *Minutes*, 30 March 1983, p. 1045.

⁵⁰⁰ OCA, RMOC, *Minutes*, 25 April 1984, pp. 1654 – 1655.

⁵⁰¹ OCA, RMOC, *Minutes*, 10 April 1985, p. 1749.

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*

amateurs and professionals, as well as offering space for occasional exhibitions. Given its long associations, the discipline was also politically active, both on a local level - the Canadian Artists Representation Ottawa (CARO) had over 100 members and was Canada's second largest and one of its most active professional artists' unions – and on a provincial level - Visual Arts Ontario estimated that there were some 800 artists and crafts people working in the Ottawa region.⁵⁰³ Ottawa artist Pat Durr, one of CARO's founders, described the interconnections:

When I arrived [from the U.S.] in 1964, the easiest way to meet the art world in Ottawa was to take a course at the [O]MAC, so I enrolled in a painting and drawing course [...] and while it was a good introduction, I thought I might enjoy teaching, so the following summer [was at] Dovercourt and Britannia Beach Community Centres for the Department of Recreation and Parks. [...] In January 1967, the Ottawa Art Association [held] its annual exhibition in the foyer of Ottawa City Hall [and] I won third prize for a drawing. [...] By 1968 I was teaching at the MAC. [Later] I became a docent at the National Gallery of Art.⁵⁰⁴

One of these connections was the volunteer Visual Arts Centre Advisory Committee (VACAC), which had been founded in 1975 following the Visual Arts Survey Exhibition No. 1. In 1980, VACAC became known as the Visual Arts Policy Advisory Group (VAPAC) and worked with Dewar's arts advisory group (MAG). With strong municipal as well as Ottawa School of Art and National Gallery support, VAPAC met with Dewar in 1984 and suggested concrete ways in which the city could improve the status of Ottawa's visual artists. VAPAC's recommendations included elements of function (designing programs that would make visual art more visible and participatory), collection (appreciation in value), provision of municipal support services (facilities,

⁵⁰³ Durr, interview.

⁵⁰⁴ Durr, pp. 31 – 32.

funding programs), and peer review and exhibition. In February 1985, Ottawa City Council accepted these proposals and approved the City of Ottawa's Visual Art Policy.⁵⁰⁵

This was a milestone in Canadian history, as it established one of Canada's first municipal Public Art Programs, and created one of the first municipal policies for visual art in the country. The visual arts policy was written by Ottawa's visual arts community, in association with municipal staff, and was a coherent set of principles and practicalities. It typified Dewar's agenda for pro-active, self-governing grassroots development because it addressed the community's needs, and was backed by strong popular support. Ottawa City Council approved \$100,000.00 for the program's start-up costs and programming. National Gallery of Canada curator Mayo Graham was hired to implement the "One Percent for Art", the "Collections Management" and the "Art Acquisition" elements of the policy, and VAPAC established a visual arts interim jury, and proposals for the administration of the visual arts acquisition budget.⁵⁰⁶ They had achieved a political space of their own and the policy was a building block for the future.

In comparison, the performing arts sector was not as well organized because there were no centring interdisciplinary forces, such as an Ottawa Performing Artists Association, no central, municipal school for amateur performers, and no federal cultural institution to provide stability rather than competition. The volunteer Council for the Arts in Ottawa, which could have acted as a political leader in this regard, had its own concerns about the arts festival and did not yet have enough authority to impose order.

There were several other reasons for a lack of cohesion. The primary problem lay

⁵⁰⁵ Nicole Zuger, pp. 24, 56.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid., pp. 24 – 26.

in the dearth of suitable facilities in the city. Demand was high and availability was low: few facilities were available to non-profit groups for long blocks of time and at an affordable price. Groups that did acquire space, such as the Ottawa Little Theatre or the GCTC, were either unable to rent out their premises (due to special tax considerations) or needed the facility full time for their own needs. Affordable indoor sites such as churches and schools were generally difficult to work in and required a great deal of extra volunteer labour to transform suitability. Other difficulties included: inadequate lighting, difficulties in audio- and video- taping performances, building code restrictions, and limitations of the existing electrical systems.

Groups were unable to hire professionally trained staff and this in turn limited their ability to develop the skills of promising amateurs – a continuum for arts performance and arts administration training had not yet been developed. The product, in the end, was compromised due to deficiencies of the infrastructure process, rather than deficiencies of the artists. As theatre director Eleanor Crowder suggested:

The difficulty has always been that there has been lip service paid to the fact that volunteers were vitally important, but when you work with a professional company they are not very useful. Having them take tickets is fine but you can't pull volunteers in to work at the level of artistic staff without spending an enormous amount of time teaching the trade. And then the artistic level goes down, but the volunteers become the next generation of audience. There are very few really useful volunteers in the artistic process unless they are at the senior high school level or university where they are consciously trying to train themselves.⁵⁰⁷

Funding criteria for grants was also a problem and especially difficult to meet in Ottawa, given the national capital competition. For municipal and regional grant purposes, the excellent radio coverage by the local CBC, CHEZ 106 and the university stations was dismissed as irrelevant, while newspaper coverage (which was

⁵⁰⁷ Crowder, interview.

unfavourable) became the standard by which the groups were judged. Media comparisons between the national and the local were inevitable. Reviewers seated in climate-controlled NAC and National Gallery facilities likely found their experiences more enjoyable in comparison to local productions held in sweltering school auditoriums or freezing church sanctuaries. Somehow, it was common to blame local artists for these deficiencies in infrastructure. Crowder summarized the theatre sector's vulnerability regarding the need for positive reviews in order to win municipal funding:

The media treatment was vile. There was one reviewer, Globerman, a Citizen reviewer who was just savage. Alvina Ruprecht was academic and had fair criticism. But the Citizen writers had no understanding of the field. And the City demanded reviews and radio reviews didn't count. So the community asked the city to have a City Press Officer because that in itself would change the funding picture. It was better when there were two newspapers, but when it went down to only the Citizen then that reviewer had enormous power.⁵⁰⁸

Unlike the visual arts community, each performance discipline (dance, drama, music) had different requirements so there was little interest in pursuing interdisciplinary work. Each was focused intently on the pursuit of its own excellence and, faced with constant struggles over limited funds, the organizations could barely cope to make ends meet. Overall, the performers' community was not ready to organize requests and present them to Ottawa City Council. The group was too disparate and challenged daily by battles on too many fronts; achieving common ground under these conditions was impossible.

⁵⁰⁸ Crowder, interview.

Conclusion

For a decade, from 1976 until 1985, Marion Dewar worked with the arts sector and was an extraordinary political force who galvanized the community into action. Coincidence and timing played a part in the success of this venture, because by the time the municipality was ready to listen to the needs of the arts sector, it was firmly established in the community and mature enough to make its voice heard. Touring and school programs introduced thousands of local children to cultural activities, and the general demand for culture intensified as audiences and participants grew younger. Economic and cultural partnerships formed to capitalize on new tourism potentials. Through Dewar's interventions, the mayor's task force identified the sector's common problems (facilities, funding, promotion, infrastructure) and put these difficulties under public scrutiny and into public debate.

In November 1985, Dewar lost the municipal election to businessman-sportsman Jim Durrell. The visual arts sector was able before the election to secure political legitimacy within the municipality. With Durrell's election, it remained to be seen how the politics of funding would reshape the performing artists' community, and whether it would be mature and unified enough to maintain a political space of its own.

Chapter Seven (1986 – 1988)

With the change in mayors and council in 1986, Ottawa's order of business seemed poised to revert back to its former conservative development orientation where, in the words of political theorist Warren Magnusson, place of privilege was accorded to those "decentring, traditional municipal concerns about land use, amenities, and territorial development."⁵⁰⁹ But Mayor Jim Durrell's predecessor Marion Dewar (1979 – 1985) had reversed the hierarchy and privileged human over commercial development. In so doing, she altered the traditional fare of municipal inclusion. For the general public, culture had become an accepted and expected element of the municipal government. Durrell accepted the status quo and managed change as a successful evolution of the existing system.

Nonetheless, knowing how long the sector had fought for inclusion and how easily favour could be lost, there were concerns within the sector that arts facilities, funding, promotion and policy issues would again be marginalized in the municipal agenda. To counter those possibilities, the sector established five complementary goals: improve and strengthen municipality-community partnerships (for example, through the Ottawa School of Art), implement arts industry standards for broad-based activities such as civic arts festivals (Festival of the Arts, etc.), expose the regional-federal double standard of funding competitions (RMOC funding the NAC), highlight a public awareness of existing regional and municipal support for culture (the regional *Cultural Profile Study* and the municipal *Arts Facilities in Ottawa Report*), and create a municipal

⁵⁰⁹ Magnusson, p. 120.

arts policy, to “achieve an awareness, positive understanding, and recognition of the importance of a local cultural identity.”⁵¹⁰

Community members worked in tandem with the municipality and organized and implemented arts programs: this provided substantial savings to the city. Ottawa arts official Nicole Zuger explained the municipal rationale for acceptance of this state of affairs.

Cultural funding is a cost effective tool for delivering cultural programs to the community. Local non-profit arts and heritage organizations in Ottawa are the major providers of cultural programs and activities in the city. This contrasts with leisure services, where the municipality is the major operator of recreation facilities and programs [which are] provided annually to leisure, senior and social service groups in direct funding. [...] Municipal cultural funding helps improve access to cultural activities for all Ottawa residents, regardless of their financial situation, by helping to keep participation costs affordable. For less than half of each cent out of each dollar that the city spends, cultural groups offer public programming and services at a fraction of what it would cost the city to deliver these directly.⁵¹¹

One difficulty with these cost efficient programs was the toll it took on volunteers. This sometimes led to bitter relationship problems between the arts organization members, the public, and the municipality. The story of the Ottawa School of Art illustrates these difficulties.

Municipal partnership with the arts community had a long tradition and began in the same year as the founding of the National Gallery of Canada (1880). According to OSA Executive Director Jeff Stellick, the relationship was built on tenacity.

... The school [OSA and predecessors] has had a long-standing relationship with the city and it goes back to 1880. It has been in various parts of the city, and it's had different relationships with the city. The people who set it up felt that at the time it was important to have a school of art – we had a school of art before we

⁵¹⁰ OCA, Ottawa City Council, *Minutes*, 5 October 1988, p. 23-93.

⁵¹¹ Zuger, p. 13.

had electricity in Ottawa. And the fact that it has survived [...] is a level of [commentary on the] determination that this is an important thing to have.⁵¹²

As background to its contemporary involvement with the city, the Ottawa Municipal Arts Centre (OMAC) began in 1953 and functioned in association with the Department of Public Recreation. A number of changes and moves occurred over the years and in 1977, the OMAC transferred to Notre Dame des Anges School on Forward Avenue. At the time, professional municipal art schools were being established in several urban centres across Canada, and transformation was imminent for the arts community centre in Ottawa.

In 1977, the OMAC incorporated itself as a not-for-profit organization and became the Ottawa School of Art (OSA). When the Forward Avenue site proved inadequate to meet ever-rising demands, the search for another facility began, but with “the real objective to acquire a permanent home that could provide the facilities necessary to a full-fledged art school”⁵¹³ – one that offered both professional and amateur programs. In 1982, with the understanding that the School would match municipal and provincial funding, the City agreed to lease 35 George Street from the NCC. According to Stellick, this caused some major problems.

... When the school was on Forward Avenue it was run in a casual manner – people would sign up for courses and take them and not pay for them – we had no tracking system. When they moved down here [to George Street in the market] they experienced a culture shock – an internal culture shock because this is a much bigger space. They had many more demands on their [volunteer] administrative staff than they had had before, and some of the habits that they had had before when things were fairly loose just didn’t work as well here. When they moved here, the organization went through a change in how it operated and there was a lot of internal strife associated with that.

⁵¹² Stellick, interview.

⁵¹³ Ricketts, p. 9.

The City, WINTARIO, and a massive half million dollar fundraising effort by the School provided the money necessary to renovate the heritage structure, the former Ottawa Wine Vault Co. Ltd. warehouse, built in 1907. The OSA building opened officially in October 1982, and shortly thereafter created a new Intensive Studies Diploma Program. The transition to a new name, mandate and location resulted in a 70% increase in enrolment, to 1140 students. With the change, Stellick suggested that this

... challenged a lot of assumptions about the school. The OSA had received Ottawa's first cultural purchase-of-service agreement in 1979, but the city had no measure on how to judge success and they were baffled by how to measure the performance of a cultural organization. At the same time that the school was adjusting to its new environment and its new reality, the city was also adjusting and those two streams met in the task force.⁵¹⁴

During the election proceedings in the fall of 1985, long-standing internal tensions at the OSA over funding, programming and staffing finally erupted publicly. The local press publicized the School's difficulties and Mayor Durrell was pressured to act quickly. The OSA requested a task force be created "... to study the situation and to make recommendations to the Board of Directors [...] and that the Task Force consist of representatives from the City of Ottawa, the Ontario Arts Council and Touche Ross & Co., auditors for the School."⁵¹⁵

Durrell accepted the challenge and within a month, the Task Force completed its work. In January 1986, it reported seven areas of major concern regarding governance and governing, financial irregularities, and personnel, and although the report had a disparaging tone and concluded that the OSA had "obvious internal weaknesses of its

⁵¹⁴ Stellick, interview. Other organizations that received purchase-of-service agreements were Opera Lyra (est. 1984) and the Council for the Arts in Ottawa (est. 1982).

⁵¹⁵ *Task Force Report: The Ottawa School of Art*, unpublished document, January 1986.

operation” and needed “exhaustive recommendations for the tightening up of the financial and management practices,” it also praised the school as a valuable contributor to Ottawa life. Its final recommendations suggested the City and the OSA develop more business-like arrangements.⁵¹⁶ This was difficult because the OSA crossed relationship boundaries, and neither the municipality, the artist-teachers nor the volunteer-administrators had a template with which to work out a solution. Stellick posed several questions that concerned the city:

Was the OSA a specialized community centre? Was it an educational centre? What kind of education should it provide? Should the City fund any education or training facility since this was an area of provincial jurisdiction and therefore the province’s expense?⁵¹⁷

The school was an anomaly and non-standard solutions were needed to improve and strengthen this relationship.

The second objective for the arts sector was to implement arts industry standards for large-scale community events, such as the Festival of the Arts. The phenomenal success of the festival meant millions of dollars in increased revenue for both commercial and non-profit groups. But unfortunately the Festival’s entire administrative foundation was built on volunteer labour, and the organizers needed municipal and regional funding for continued festival administration. Local governments had no strategy to deal with such an unexpected venture, but they wished to retain this highly popular and economically profitable event. The municipality’s response was to remain reactive rather than proactive. Several problems resulted from this stance. Although the level of volunteer enthusiasm for the festival was still high, the council organizers (Council for

⁵¹⁶ For a graphic overview of the history of the Ottawa School of Art and its relationship with the City of Ottawa *vis à vis* facilities, number of students and supporting agencies, see Appendix X, as quoted in Ricketts, p. 57.

⁵¹⁷ Stellick, interview.

the Arts in Ottawa – CAO) felt that level of volunteer energy and commitment was unsustainable in the long term. The CAO wanted to provide compensation to key volunteers, if only via honorariums. Multi-year funding was required to maintain festival continuity and stability, but the city worked only on an annual budget system, and the regional government similarly provided no long term funding.

By 1987, Ottawa cultural festivals were a major economic draw for the region, and over one year showed an 80% increase in operating budgets, from \$3 million in 1986 to \$5.4 million in 1987.⁵¹⁸ Local collaboration to pool talent and resources resulted in the 1987 creation of the National Capital Region Festival Network, at which time the City of Ottawa's Festival Assistance Program Policy was also established. Ottawa provided \$321,000.00 towards the festivals' 1987 budgets.⁵¹⁹ Within this network the Festival of Spring (Canadian Tulip Festival) attracted a million visitors, and utilized thousands of volunteers. Other festivals also blossomed, including the *Franco-ontarien Festival* (est. 1976), the Festival for the Folks (later known as the Ottawa Folk Festival, est. 1976), the Ottawa International Film Festival (est. 1976), Winterlude (est. 1979), the Ottawa Jazz Festival (est. 1980),⁵²⁰ and the Ottawa Dance Festival (est. 1984).

The one-day Celebration Arts Ottawa event of October 1982 became a 17-day Festival of the Arts extravaganza, which incorporated bus tours, visual arts exhibitions, outdoor musical and theatrical events, and many other activities, all organized through

⁵¹⁸ Gary Mainprize, "The National Capital Region Festival Network" in *ARTicles*, January to February 1988, Volume 6, Number 1.

⁵¹⁹ Zuger, p. 55.

⁵²⁰ Southwarth, "Ottawa" in EMC 1005b. It was renamed the *Ottawa International Jazz Festival* in 1988.

the CAO's volunteers.⁵²¹ Despite these successes, the major drawback for all the festivals continued to be undercapitalization, which resulted in the inability to save or plan for the future. Government tried to lever corporate support, but the latter awaited the former, creating a Catch-22 situation. Festival of the Arts Executive Producer Peter Harris said: "It is a frightening proposition not knowing from one season to the next whether I can hire the essential manpower; the paradox doesn't appear to have any simple solution."⁵²²

The third agenda of the arts community was to expose the regional-federal double standard whereby regional taxes were funding a national arts institution. The RMOC's rationale for this was confusing. Since 1974, the RMOC provided annual funds to the NAC - the only local government in Canada that supported a federal institution. While the arts community worked to establish a new arts industry infrastructure in Ottawa, it was hindered in its attempts, even on the volunteer, not-for-profit level, by competition for funds by the federal NAC. Despite local sector claims of unfair competition and evidence to show the need for regional tax funds to be used on local issues, the RMOC ignored these arguments and remained *tête-à-tête* with the NAC. (The local not-for-profit professional and semi-professional arts companies began to receive RMOC funding in 1978.)

By 1986, the RMOC Arts Advisory Board received applications requesting \$1,191,648.20 from 74 applicants: an increase of 22 applications from the year before.⁵²³

⁵²¹ Mainprize, p. 10.

⁵²² Ibid.

⁵²³ OCA, RMOC, *Minutes*, 23 April 1986, p. 1928.

Despite the increased demand, in April 1986 the RMOC Executive reduced the proposed \$1.15 per capita funding to \$1.05. The Board raised concerns about this reduction:

In the last decade there has been an abundance of new artistic talent springing up in Canada's major centres. Ottawa-Carleton is no exception and is an impressively accomplished cultural community. Thanks to the stimulus of committees such as the Advisory Committee on the Arts, this community continues to grow and serve as a training ground for local talent. [...] Aside from the aesthetic benefits are a myriad of economic benefits [...] being local in nature, the arts employ area residents and spend the majority of their budgets in Ottawa-Carleton; attract audiences from the region; act as educators to local residents [...] and studies have shown that this type of interaction to the young results in a greater appreciation of the arts later on. Financial assistance also increases the accessibility of the arts to all income and age levels, through free exhibits, concerts and plays.⁵²⁴

The Board offered the RMOC Executive further reasons why the per capita should not be reduced:

Regional grants focus funds to the Ottawa-Carleton area and assist the artist as no other agency can, assisting both new and established artists and arts groups. [...] The arts will not survive without government assistance. They are labour intensive and prospects for productivity gains limited. Government subsidy permits experimentation and the raising of standards, while making the arts available to the widest possible audience.⁵²⁵

The 1986 allocations awarded \$359,888.00 to 52 local arts organizations and \$270,112.00 to the NAC. Twenty-one other groups applied but received nothing. Excluding the NAC disbursement, the per capita arts funding was \$.57, one of the lowest per capita allotments in the country.⁵²⁶

One of the rejected applications was from the Council for the Arts in Ottawa (CAO), which organized the not-for-profit Festival of the Arts. In 1986, CAO President Susan Annis asked that the Festival application be reconsidered by the RMOC because

⁵²⁴ Ibid., pp. 1930 – 1931.

⁵²⁵ Ibid., pp. 1931 – 1932.

⁵²⁶ Ibid., pp. 1925 – 1927.

the CAO required a coordinator for the visual arts exhibition segment of the festival. Annis pleaded her case: "... the funding will go directly to him – for a project which will benefit many artists in the region – and not to the arts council, or to the Festival of the Arts. Both the CAO and the Festival of the Arts are simply providing the structure in which a substantial area visual art exhibition can work."⁵²⁷ The rationale for RMOC arts funding was based on the policy and procedures adopted by Regional Council, which used the NAC as the professional standard and measured all other applications against this. Grants were rewarded for "artistic excellence, encouraging cultural growth within the Region and contributing to the community, [and] showing efforts to obtain support from other public and private source, and administrative competence."⁵²⁸ Consequently, the festival application was again denied because it was deemed an amateur production by the RMOC.

In 1987, the NAC received a \$270,000.00 grant and the remaining \$396,600.00 was divided among 55 local groups.⁵²⁹ Twenty-six others were dismissed as amateur efforts and among them, again, was the Festival of the Arts. This case underscored a key problem: the distinctions between professional and amateur endeavours, and between municipal and regional responsibilities, were becoming blurred and the RMOC policies and procedures did not acknowledge or accommodate these changes.

In November 1987, following the CBC-hosted public forum "Arts in the City – Does Anybody Care?" a new arts advocacy group formed to publicize these problems.

⁵²⁷ Letter from Susan Annis, President of the Council for the Arts in Ottawa, to RMOC Executive Committee, on 16 April 1986.

⁵²⁸ OCA, RMOC, *Minutes*, 23 April 1986, p. 1930.

⁵²⁹ OCA, RMOC, *Minutes*, 13 May 1987, pp. 2312 – 2317.

The Ottawa-Carleton Lobby for the Arts was a sub-committee of the CAO. The Lobby group protested the RMOC 1988 budget allowance of \$1.15 per capita (\$707,250.00), approved in October 1987, which they considered low in comparison to other per capita allotment in cities such as Oshawa (\$11.68), Toronto (\$9.00), Saskatoon (\$5.27), Windsor (\$4.48), Hamilton (\$3.56), Regina (\$2.98), and Ottawa and Region (\$1.95, including the NAC).⁵³⁰ The Lobby Group asked the RMOC Executive for improved support immediately. It cited losses the city had incurred in the arts community within the last five years, such as the Ottawa Dance Theatre, Theatre 2000, Penguin Theatre, Wells Gallery, Braam Gallery, York Street Theatre Company, Ann Doran Gallery, and Hibernia Gallery, as well as others that were on the brink, such as Opera Lyra.

We are asking you [the RMOC] to give a clear signal of the value of Arts to our region by at least matching funding support that is being made by other Canadian cities and regions. If we are to compete successfully as a major centre both nationally and internationally we must put amounts into the arts comparable to our counterparts throughout Canada.⁵³¹

They discussed the arts, civic pride and community self-worth.

In terms of becoming a much more “unique” and “vital” culturally defined, urban centre, this capital region has suffered greatly. In the past ten to twenty years, this condition can be attributed to the Region’s inability to take advantage of the benefits accompanying size and increased population – the threat today is mostly from a lack of vision and a lack of sympathetic commitment. Excluding economic considerations, this lack of vision entails an unspoken policy of neglect. That is, a wait-and-see, laissez-faire attitude that leaves in its wake, marginally sustained arts groups, individuals and cultural events. There exists a need today [...] not only for a consistent progressive program of funding, but a firm direction in conscious “Arts and Culture Policy making” within the region.⁵³²

⁵³⁰ OCA, RMOC, *Minutes*, 9 December 1987, p. 6131. Estimates from Jiri Zuzanek, “Municipal Support for the Arts in Canada,” (University of Waterloo, May 1987).

⁵³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6131.

⁵³² *Ibid.*, p. 6132.

There was also a “national trend of significantly growing arts audiences” as experienced locally by groups such as the GCTC, le Groupe de la Place Royale, the Franco-ontarien Festival, Jazz and Dance Festivals, and the CAO’s Festival of the Arts in Ottawa, and yet even these ensembles were “financially, pressed to the limit.”⁵³³ In 1988, 99 applications requested \$1,260,595.00. The RMOC Arts Advisory Committee remarked that for the first time, “there were significant number of requests from three new and distinct categories: culture and heritage; folk art or multicultural; and community and special organizations.”⁵³⁴ Despite protestations from the community and evidence of losses as a result of the NAC-region funding scheme, the RMOC Council continued to approve NAC grants. In 1988, 51 local applicants received \$437,250.00 and the NAC, \$270,000.00.⁵³⁵ The early fears that Mayor Durrell’s right wing council would hinder local arts sector development were overshadowed by the RMOC-NAC practice.

The fourth aim of the sector was to investigate and highlight public awareness of existing regional and municipal support for culture. These findings were published in two reports, both initiated in 1987. The RMOC commissioned the *Toward a More Complete Culture: The Arts and Culture Study of Ottawa-Carleton Summary Report* (also known as the Ekos Report) and the City of Ottawa sponsored the *Arts Facilities in Ottawa Report*. The latter led directly to establishment of a corporate cultural policy for Ottawa, the arts sector’s fifth and final goal.

⁵³³ Ibid.

⁵³⁴ OCA, RMOC, *Minutes*, 11 May 1988, p. 2017.

⁵³⁵ Ibid.

RMOC Arts and Culture Study

Investigation of RMOC activities resulted in 1987 in the commissioned RMOC *Arts and Culture Study* to determine the RMOC's future needs, formulate policies, and evaluate program effectiveness.⁵³⁶ Arts consultant Terry Cheney was hired to write the Terms of Reference.⁵³⁷ For several months, Cheney met with representatives of the newly-formed RMOC Arts and Cultural Study Task Force, as well as arts community representatives, area municipalities, and the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture (MCC), to provide information for the Terms of Reference and to help define its role, which was "to provide local governments and community groups with a data base of information which may be used at their discretion to guide and plan for the future within their jurisdictions," and not "alter or enlarge the regional government's role in Ottawa-Carleton's artistic and cultural life."⁵³⁸ In his report, Cheney outlined the contributions that the RMOC and the municipalities had made toward the development of the sector.

The RMOC established an Arts Advisory Committee in 1979, and annually awards over half a million dollars in arts grants. It recently established an arts administration officer position to assist the advisory committee. [...] There is also an abundance of arts and cultural programs that exist within municipal recreation departments and arts councils and committees in Gloucester, Kanata, Nepean and Ottawa. [...] Nepean has assessed its needs for a theatre and is studying the market for recreational and cultural services; in Gloucester a group of residents prepared a report of cultural policies for the City; and Ottawa has commissioned a report on arts development [the Facilities Report], established a visual arts policy, reviewed the needs of arts groups for facilities, and is assessing its recreational and cultural services.⁵³⁹

⁵³⁶ OCA, RMOC, *Minutes*, 22 October 1986, p. 5153.

⁵³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 5153 – 5156.

⁵³⁸ OCA, RMOC, *Minutes*, 8 July 1987, p. 3529.

⁵³⁹ *Ibid.*

The RMOC *Arts and Culture Study*'s Terms of Reference included standard quantitative and qualitative survey elements, and the aim of the study was to provide a database of information from which future development of community arts and cultural opportunities could be made, while "maximizing the impact of expenditures."⁵⁴⁰ The geographic scope of the survey would be the Census Metropolitan Region of Ottawa-Hull, as defined by Statistics Canada. This was to be the first broad based survey of its kind to be undertaken in the region and would focus on data collection and analysis regarding community preference for programs, development and provision of service for these programs, and facilities.

[The *Arts and Culture Study*] would encompass performing and visual arts, crafts, literary arts, library and educational programming, heritage activities (preservation, archive and restorations), museums, botanical gardens, aquariums and the "culture industries" of film, video, sound recording and publishing. The study would address non-profit and relevant commercial, professional, amateur and leisure endeavours.⁵⁴¹

The research product would belong jointly to the RMOC and the MCC, and the data collected would become the property of the RMOC. In July 1987, the RMOC approved the Terms of Reference and an invitation was made, calling for submissions. Throughout August, a sub-committee of the Advisory Committee on the Arts held interviews, after which the firm of Ekos Research Associates, in association with Jean-Paul L'Allier et Associés, was recommended to the RMOC Executive. In September 1987 the RMOC Executive approved the Ekos contract, subject to the provision of

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 3530.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid., p. 3531.

matching funds (\$50,000.00) from the Province of Ontario.⁵⁴² Both the region and the municipality were working to find solutions to a recognized inequitable situation.

In August 1988, Ekos Research Associates released its RMOC-commissioned report: *Toward a More Complete Culture: The Arts and Culture Study of Ottawa-Carleton Summary Report* (also known as the Ekos Report).⁵⁴³ The study provided the first modern, comprehensive review of the state of the region's local arts and culture scene, and surveyed everything from the attitudes of citizens towards government sponsorship in the arts, to the availability of facilities to produce and perform that art.

The significance of the Ekos Report was that it was the first "complete look at the region's artists and facilities, their concerns, and how [they] stacked up against the rest of the country."⁵⁴⁴ It did not do well. In the words of Councillor Diane Holmes "I was surprised to see that even *with* the federal institutions, we rank about seventh across the country. Without the federal institutions, we're right off the map as far as cultural support."⁵⁴⁵

The Ekos Report's summarized the region's cultural infrastructure problems and culture in the region was defined as an organic system,⁵⁴⁶ and subdivided into high culture,⁵⁴⁷ popular culture,⁵⁴⁸ and ethnic culture.⁵⁴⁹ The Report focused on the system of

⁵⁴² OCA, RMOC, *Minutes*, 9 September 1987, pp. 4304 – 4305.

⁵⁴³ The Report was released to the RMOC in August 1988. The full report was released to the general public in February 1989.

⁵⁴⁴ OCA, Ekos Research Associates, *Toward a More Complete Culture: The Arts and Culture Study of Ottawa-Carleton, Summary Report*, 31 August 1988, p. i.

⁵⁴⁵ Mike Anderson, "The State of the Scene," in RMOC, *Minutes*, 22 February 1989, p. 1336.

⁵⁴⁶ Ekos, p. 4.

⁵⁴⁷ Ekos, p. 3. For the high culture category, this was divided into two sections of arts and heritage. Heritage meant art galleries, museums, historic sites, etc. Arts meant visual, literary, craft, and performing arts of music, dance and theatre.

“cultural production, distribution and consumption” that developed to produce a standard of high culture products.

In a three-tier system, with the amateur arts at the bottom, the semi-professional and professional in the middle, and the national or elite arts at the top, what the region was missing was a system to support the middle ground.

The regional, professional level of infrastructure that exists in similar sized centres is absent in Ottawa-Carleton. While amateur arts and culture are healthy, it is a great leap from this level to the national level, both for consumers and producers of arts and culture.⁵⁵⁰

The Ekos Report divided the problem of the “missing [regional level] middle” into four areas, with quantitative and qualitative research methods applied to each to discover the community’s needs and preferences for: (i) regional consumers, (ii) material infrastructure (facilities), (iii) human infrastructure (artists), and (iv) public and private sector distributors, administrators and funders.⁵⁵¹

In the first category, regional consumers were identified as the most highly educated population in the country, and consumed cultural products at a rate above that of the national average. Amateur participation in cultural affairs was also above average.⁵⁵² Many were dissatisfied that most of the activities were centralized in the downtown core (where the tourists were), with virtually no offerings in the outlying regions. The francophone community felt it was much more poorly served than the

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid., popular culture meant mass culture and lifestyles, such as shopping, entertainment, crafts, sports, electronic mass media, gastronomy, etc.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid., ethnic culture meant language and ethnic / ethnicity symbols, such as “folk” culture.

⁵⁵⁰ Ekos, p. i.

⁵⁵¹ Ekos, p. i.

⁵⁵² Ekos, p. 21.

Anglophone community. Only 35% of the population felt that the regional government supported arts and culture well.⁵⁵³ Most consumers surveyed viewed arts and culture highly, recognized it as an essential ingredient of a quality community life, and identified it as a worthy recipient of public investment.⁵⁵⁴ Local governments had surpassed the elementary biophysical needs of their populations (sewers and roads) and could now address the higher order socio-cultural needs of their citizens. Artists as producers were recognized as a source of quality-of-life products, and the survey indicated a high level of citizen interest in the acquisition of these products through government funding.

The local public is very favourably disposed toward public sector funding of arts and culture, significantly more so than in the rest of the nation as a whole. This forms part of a strong argument for increased local government support of arts and culture.⁵⁵⁵

In the second category, the provision of material infrastructure (facilities) was found to be dramatically lacking in the region. Ottawa-Carleton was the fourth largest metropolitan centre in Canada, and even with the inclusion of the national facilities as the primary cultural base, the region still ranked seventh in the country. Without including the national facilities, “the region’s cultural infrastructure [was] an embarrassment.”⁵⁵⁶ There was a need for theatres, galleries and concert halls for public presentation, as well as rehearsal, studio, storage and administration space for the artists and arts organizations. The lack of these was a major drawback to development. The Report

⁵⁵³ Ekos, pp. 13–14.

⁵⁵⁴ Ekos, p. 21.

⁵⁵⁵ Ekos, p. 15.

⁵⁵⁶ Ekos, p. i.

argued that although facilities currently fell outside of the purview of the RMOC granting program:

... the evidence from all sources presents facilities as the highest funding priority. Facilities, in a sense, are equated with arts and culture. In fact, according to current thinking, supply (in the form of facilities) precedes demand. Once an arts and culture facility is in place, it has been demonstrated that demand immediately increased for what that facility provides.⁵⁵⁷

After an analysis of the third category, human infrastructure (artists), it was noted that 75% of the region's artists lived in Ottawa, but 20% were planning to leave the region within the next two years.⁵⁵⁸ There was strong dissatisfaction with the lack of production and performance workspace, but most expressed satisfaction with their collegial relationships and with the public's appreciation of their work. Artists' education levels were high, with over 60% of resident artists having university degrees, but income levels were lower than national averages, especially for performing and visual artists. The majority wanted more opportunities for professional development (arts education), and a greater level of promotion:

... the funding of arts and culture facilities must be considered as the salient need. This is followed by the funding of festivals and special events, and by the funding of artists and artistic organizations (with an emphasis on training and development. [...]) The lack of public awareness of local arts and culture was cited by a number of artists as a cause of the malaise of local producers of arts [...]) there was dissatisfaction with the information available, and when asked how local governments could improve that, most artists suggested the holding of exhibitions of the works of local artists, increased public education, and improved promotion and publicity by governments and the private sector.⁵⁵⁹

Although artists benefited from occasional employment with the NCC, or with annual festivals, most were self-employed.

⁵⁵⁷ Ekos, p. 16.

⁵⁵⁸ Ekos, pp. 11 – 12.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid.

The fourth category, public and private sector distributors, administrators and funders, was the most difficult to describe, because of the region's unusual multi-jurisdictional character. In a later commentary, *Ottawa Sun* reporter David Gamble described this as

... an idiotic situation. Where else in Canada can you find 600,000 people living in six cities, five townships, answering to 11 mayors, one regional government, five police departments and nine fire departments and every one of them calls Ottawa home?⁵⁶⁰

For cultural support, according to the EKOS Report, there were five distinct levels of governance.⁵⁶¹ Recognition of their roles and identification of their responsibilities was considered paramount towards the successful growth of the regional arts sector, but coordination of effort was difficult. This affected the level of cultural funding received for the area.

The general thinking of Queen's Park is that the federal government is at fault. [...] Queen's Park thinks 'Ottawa is doing fine, why should we send them any money, they're the capital anyhow?' For decades, Queen's Park has assumed that the federal government will take care of Ottawa, and the federal government has always assumed that Ottawa doesn't need to be taken care of.⁵⁶²

The Study found that less than 1% of the surveyed local artists and arts organizations received municipal funding, and 1% received regional funding. The provincial government funded 6% of the artists surveyed,⁵⁶³ with 4% receiving federal government

⁵⁶⁰ David Gamble, "Too many lines on our map," *Ottawa Sun*, 25 September 1988.

⁵⁶¹ These levels included the federal government, the National Capital Commission (NCC), the Communauté régionale de l'Outaouais (CRO), the provincial governments (Ontario and Quebec), the regional government (RMOC), and the eleven regional municipalities.

⁵⁶² Anderson, p. 1336.

⁵⁶³ According to the Report, the provincial government provided \$2.47 per capita funding in the Ottawa-Carleton region, versus the Toronto area, which received \$6.61 per capita funding.

funding.⁵⁶⁴ Private subsidies and donations ranged from 8.3% to 13.6%. The local groups or individual artists who did receive funds were rewarded according to levels of artistic ability (amateur to professional continuum) and the public's expectations. The RMOC diverted approximately 50% of all possible funds to the NAC as it received the majority of RMOC funds.⁵⁶⁵

One of the *Study*'s proposals suggested the "creation of a regional arts planning council" made up of artists and members of the NCC, "to hand out grants to arts groups." Most artists and municipal cultural employees of the region felt a council was unnecessary, "do we need another step of bureaucracy?" and felt that "regionalizing the arts community would give the provincial government an excuse to provide a lower lump sum grant for the region to divide among arts groups." There were also concerns about the recommendation for a central facility "to be constructed to showcase the top professionals in the region" because it would be "highly elitist." Ottawa, with the majority of artists, was requesting the facility be placed in its centre core, but many felt that that would either turn outlying areas into cultural backwaters, or deprive these areas of local talent if "they migrated to an Ottawa facility." There was no easy solution. While the RMOC's regional arts *Study* was underway during 1987 and 1988, Ottawa suffered its own facility dilemmas, and investigated its own municipal arts investigation.

⁵⁶⁴ Ekos, p. 10.

⁵⁶⁵ Ekos, p. i.

Arts Facilities in Ottawa Report

In early 1987, the municipality closed Ottawa Fire Station No. 3, which resulted in the eviction and displacement of a dozen community arts groups who used the multiple-use site. Their appeals to the Department of Recreation for alternate accommodation prompted the sub Community Services and Operations Committee to investigate the issue of provision of arts facilities in Ottawa. During the spring of 1987 this investigation widened to include aspects about cultural heritage and the Ottawa Public Library Board.

The investigation led to the release of the *Arts Facilities in Ottawa Report*, in May 1987. The *Report* found significant discrepancies in capital budgetary allocations between the arts community and the athletic community; 97.1% of the Department of Recreation's 1981-1986 capital budget of \$27,063,480.00 was spent on athletic facilities, while only 2.9% remained for repairs and maintenance on multipurpose facilities used for arts activities. It recommended four courses of action from the municipality to counter this imbalance: address facility needs, revise the 1985 Arts Capital Grants Policy, coordinate arts programs between the RMOC and the municipality, and requested: "that the Department of Recreation and Culture prepare a corporate cultural policy which would provide direction for the allocation of municipal resources towards the arts and culture."⁵⁶⁶ With the latter promise of the May 1987 *Arts Facilities in Ottawa Report* to create an arts policy, the fifth objective of the community began to be fulfilled.

⁵⁶⁶ OCA, Ottawa, *Minutes*, 2 March 1988, p. 7-78.

City of Ottawa Corporate Cultural Policy

In December 1987, Ottawa City Council approved the four recommendations of the *Arts Facilities in Ottawa Report*. It also recommended

...a strategy for meeting the City's facility needs for its arts programs be developed as the first phase in the development of an overall cultural policy; that staff seek to develop and maintain an effective working relationship with the Region's Arts and Culture Steering Committee in view of Ottawa's especial interest in the development of a coherent and feasible arts and culture policy framework; and that the scope of the Arts Capital Grants Policy be reviewed.⁵⁶⁷

In March 1988 Ottawa City Council approved the policy's Terms of Reference, and determined the policy should be ready six months' hence. City staff were dismayed at the short preparation time, and requested access to the RMOC *Arts and Culture Study* findings (underway at the same time). Although the RMOC "continued to involve the City of Ottawa in the development of the Arts and Culture Study process [...] the City was not informed about the availability, format or timing of the of the information that would be made available to municipalities within the Region,"⁵⁶⁸ and their requests were ignored until release of the Arts and Culture Study Summary Interim Report in late April 1988.

In addition to the documented inequality of Department of Recreation funding towards cultural facility needs (2.9% of total recreation budget), a second rationale for the policy focused on the need for equitable government support.

Ottawa, as the nation's capital has an impressive cultural profile. [...] The benefits to the citizens of Ottawa by the presence of these resources have been many. The impediments, although considerably less obvious, have affected the local cultural scene. In the case of the arts, the federal institutions and agencies with the national mandate do not support the local artistic community, however,

⁵⁶⁷ OCA, Ottawa, *Minutes*, 2 December 1987, p. 1-119.

⁵⁶⁸ OCA, Ottawa, *Minutes*, 2 March 1988, p. 7-75.

the common perception has been that they do. [...] While the federal presence in Ottawa is somewhat overwhelming, the provincial one is inversely invisible. Provincial cultural institutions [...] give added substance to Toronto [and] their programs have little involvement with the Ottawa community. [...] In the absence or deficiency of municipal cultural institutions, facilities and resources, the arts and heritage needs of the local community have not been served.⁵⁶⁹

A third policy reason included meeting increased social demand for local cultural products. A fourth included the need to modernize the municipality's efforts to deal with the situation.

Municipal support for the arts and heritage has evolved, especially since the 1950s [...] but it has not kept pace with the growth rate of Ottawa's cultural community and the increased demand for cultural services [...] This support has been characteristically erratic and limited in focus, [with] recurring problems such as an absence of support, ad hoc decision-making, ineffective delivery mechanism, weak linkages, and an apparent lack of funding. [...] The City of Ottawa has attempted to deal with emerging cultural issues and problems without a clearly defined mandate. It is therefore timely that the City identifies its role and responsibilities in responding to the cultural needs of its residents and the cultural community through the Corporate Cultural Policy.⁵⁷⁰

For City of Ottawa cultural staff, the intervening months from March to September 1988 were busy. In keeping with the city's Public Participation Policy, five public information sessions and four focus groups were held to discuss the draft policy. Groups consulted included the Ottawa Library Board, Heritage Ottawa, the Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (LACAC), the Historical Society of Ottawa, the Bytown Museum Board of Management, the Visual Arts Advisory Committee, the CAO, and the OSA, as well as other cultural community members, government agencies, and local educational institutions.⁵⁷¹ The Terms of Reference also presented a project implementation schedule and a listing of in-house and public

⁵⁶⁹ OCA, City of Ottawa, Department of Recreation and Culture: *A Cultural Policy for the City of Ottawa*, p. 3.

⁵⁷⁰ OCA, Ottawa, *Minutes*, 5 October 1988, p. 7-78.

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 23-97.

consultation requirements. The Department of Recreation and Culture staff collaborated with other city departments to focus on three major areas: survey the municipality's arts and heritage facilities and collections, interview the city's providers, distributors, and consumers of cultural products, and examine arts and heritage activities, programs, and services. Their research (data collection, comparative research and analysis) and consultation with the cultural community and other interested participants, was completed by April 1988. Further workshops within the cultural community to discuss findings were held in June, and a draft policy was expected by the end of August.⁵⁷²

While the city's recreation staff prepared their report for the September 1988 deadline, other notable cultural events occurred in Ottawa and in the surrounding region. The Ottawa Jazz Festival gained world acclaim for its international programming, and in 1988 became known as the Ottawa International Jazz Festival, one of the largest in Canada.⁵⁷³ Nearby, the Nepean City Council listened to the artists' concerns about need for space, and added these to the municipal budget. In March 1988, it opened the Nepean Civic Square, which became home not only to Nepean City Hall, but also the Central Library, the Nepean Art Gallery, and the 986-seat CentrepoinTE Theatre, the region's first professional performance hall, where both local and touring groups could perform. The Theatre provided a "home" to regional arts groups, such as the Nepean Symphony Orchestra, the Nepean Concert Band, the Amadeus Concert Society, and the Savoy Society (formerly of Ottawa), and others.

⁵⁷² OCA, Ottawa, *Minutes*, 5 October 1988, p. 7-82.

⁵⁷³ Southworth, "Ottawa" in EMC 1005b.

On 5 October 1988, Ottawa City Council approved three cultural recommendations. The first concerned the use of schools as alternative arts facility sites; the second concerned Arts Court; and the third was the approval of Ottawa's corporate cultural policy.

The Artists in the Schools program began with the Ottawa Roman Catholic Separate School Board (ORCSSB) in 1971, and worked initially as a co-operative, service-in-kind venture between the individual schools and resident artists. As urban settlement patterns changed over the following decade and some inner-city schools became redundant, in 1985 the ORCSSB leased its Graham Avenue site to the Council for the Arts in Ottawa (CAO). The 20 Graham Avenue Artists Cooperative was established at that time, and the school was used as a multi-purpose work and artists' collective space, for displays and exhibitions, meetings and workshops, and as an educational information and resource centre for university, college and high school students in art and photography, architecture and design programs. In fact, it was this program that nurtured the Penguin Theatre Company.

In early 1988 the school board asked the Cooperative to find alternate space. The Visual Arts Advisory Committee,⁵⁷⁴ concerned that these artists would be homeless, made a proposal "that the City act as a major sponsor of a co-operative artist studio complex in a vacant school and / or City owned property, as they become available."⁵⁷⁵ The City agreed, and the ORCSSB offered the City three other school sites: St. Leo (860 Colson Avenue); St. François (12 Stirling Avenue); and Routhier (172 Guigues Avenue).

⁵⁷⁴ The Visual Arts Advisory Committee was named formerly as the Visual Arts Centre Advisory Committee (VACAC) and the Visual Arts Advisory Policy Committee (VAPAC).

⁵⁷⁵ OCA, Ottawa, *Minutes*, 5 October 1988, p. 23-129. The issue was first discussed at the Ottawa City Council meeting 27 July 1988, re-addressed 28 September 1988, and approved 5 October 1988.

For the latter two, the City already held an interest because it helped finance the building of gymnasiums in both schools.⁵⁷⁶ As an example of the city's use of school space, the CAO requested City assistance because as a non-profit organization, "the CAO had been unsuccessful in securing a suitable school for use as studio space, and due to [changed] Ministry of Education requirements on the disposal or leasing of School Board property, the CAO needs the City to intervene on its behalf to secure any vacant school and / or city-owned facility."⁵⁷⁷ City Council approved a recommendation that the Commissioner of Recreation and Culture negotiate a lease with the ORCSSB for Routhier or St. François. The CAO in turn would be responsible to act as landlord, would assume all operating and improvement costs, and also acquire general liability insurance.⁵⁷⁸

The second major recommendation concerned Arts Court. The initial approach of City Council (March 1986 – July 1988) regarding the abandoned provincial courthouse site had been to leave its entire development to the not-for-profit Ottawa Arts Court Foundation (OACF). In November 1987, the OACF recognized the scope and complexity of the task, and prepared an alternate proposal for capital improvements while at the same time initiating on-site programming. In 1988,

utilizing limited resources but enormous effort and goodwill the OACF, with the support of the City of Ottawa, produced and installed eighteen art exhibitions, accommodated fifty literary and performing arts exhibitions, and held summer programs for 2,700 children, at Arts Court.⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 23-130. "The City currently has an equity interest in Routhier and St. François as the City contributed funds towards the construction of the gymnasium at both locations. Agreements exist between the City and the ORCSSB to ensure community recreational use of the gymnasia."

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 23-131.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 23-128.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 23-51.

Recognizing the value and the potential of the building, Council approved of the alternate capital and arts programming proposal.

A long-term plan for the site was developed in November 1987 by the OACF, and on 5 October 1988 Ottawa City Council approved operating funds of \$20,000.00 for the OACF's 1988 budget; approved \$19,000.00 for the 1989 Arts Court operating budget; and approved \$77,000.00 for capital improvement, derived from the Department of Recreation and Culture's 1988 Major Self Help Account.⁵⁸⁰

The final recommendation on 5 October 1988 was the adoption of the Corporate Cultural Policy for the City of Ottawa. For arts professionals in the community, such as David Currie, Conductor of the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra and Professor of Music at the University of Ottawa, the timing of the policy seemed appropriate.

I think it quite normal that the policy developed in 1988. There were a couple of landmark things. The federal government and federal institutions had a huge impact and I think the city developed on a number of levels later than a normal city would, without the presence of the federal government resident in the heart of it. When I arrived in 1971 Ottawa was a very small town where everybody relied on everybody else and it didn't need a cultural policy [then].⁵⁸¹

Currie also spoke about Mayor Marion Dewar and her vision and idea of common good, and the development of community as the ethic of the day, which the city should support.

But in later years, when the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra (OSO) grew into renting the NAC at \$20,000.00 rental per evening, we built infrastructure within our organization. We needed an arts policy because we needed funders. If we did everything out of our basements, then there were no real costs. Now the OSO is a regional orchestra that provides a professional product, and it is part of the growth of the whole community. We look to our public institutions and to the tax base and say that we are providing this cultural service. There is a real commitment to develop the place you are in, at the level you find, and to take care of where you live. So we needed a cultural policy in 1988 to build an infrastructure for the next stage of growth.⁵⁸²

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 23-50.

⁵⁸¹ Currie, interview.

⁵⁸² Ibid.

In this evolution, the sector's goals -- to improve and strengthen municipality-community partnerships, implement arts industry standards for broad-based arts activities, expose the double standard of funding competitions, highlight public awareness of existing municipal support for culture, and create a municipal arts policy -- were objectives to be met in the policy.

The policy document was a milestone because it was the first formal iteration of the city's role and responsibilities, in relationship to the artistic (and heritage) community of Ottawa.⁵⁸³ The all-encompassing cultural policy included both arts and heritage. The "arts" were defined as the performing, visual, media and literary arts disciplines, and "heritage" encompassed history, architecture, archaeology, ethnology and natural heritage.⁵⁸⁴ The Mission Statement outlined the city's cultural vision:

The City of Ottawa will foster an environment that promotes creativity, access to, and the pursuit of excellence in cultural experiences; and the preservation and enhancement of Ottawa's dynamic and diverse local cultural identity.⁵⁸⁵

It will respect the efforts of the local cultural community, the two official language communities, as well as the diverse cultural character of the City. The intent is to strengthen the community's goals and objectives, while at the same time realize a local cultural identity separate from the federal presence in the City.⁵⁸⁶

But were the arts sector's objectives addressed? The policy's Terms of Reference, approved 12 March 1988, stated it would:

⁵⁸³ The policy encompassed the performing, visual, media and literary arts disciplines, as well as the interests of heritage (the disciplines of history, architecture, archaeology, ethnology and natural heritage.) From OCA, Ottawa, *Minutes*, 5 October 1988, p. 23-94.

⁵⁸⁴ OCA, Ottawa, *Minutes*, 2 March 1988, p. 7-83.

⁵⁸⁵ Under Attachment I of the Corporate Cultural Policy of the City of Ottawa, section "Principles", subsection "Mission Statement".

⁵⁸⁶ OCA, Ottawa, *Minutes*, 5 October 1988, p. 23-95. Under sub-section "Mission Statement".

- I. Achieve an awareness, positive understanding, and recognition of the importance of a *local cultural identity*;
- II. Determine the Corporation's cultural mandate, role and responsibilities; and
- III. Facilitate the effective coordination of the City's cultural activities with individuals, groups, agencies and other levels of government in Ottawa.⁵⁸⁷

For Ottawa, the atypical character of the capital city, with its offerings of national and international-class museums, the National Art Gallery and the National Arts Centre, meant that the amateur, semi-professional and professional resident artists of the city vied with the federally-funded, national institutions for audience, volunteers, corporate and media support. The marginalization of the local cultural scene was acknowledged in the first of these terms of reference.

The second statement addressed practical needs for civic arts facilities, allocations or grants [allotments] for operating, project and capital funding, and the establishment of municipal infrastructure for cultural sector and arts industry development, similar to that in other municipalities in Canada.

The policy's final term of reference recognized the work the City had undertaken for the sector during the last fifty years,⁵⁸⁸ and acknowledged that the City was not the "only partner involved in local cultural development. Without the efforts of educational institutions, the Ottawa Library Board, other levels of government, and the numerous local cultural organizations, agencies and dedicated individuals, much of what existed

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 23-93.

⁵⁸⁸ This work included heritage planning and programming (Billings Estate, established in 1975); archive services (City Archives established in 1976); direct arts programs (Art in Public Places established in 1985); cultural twinning with The Hague (in 1980s) and sundry other support services (e.g. grants, purchase of service agreements, service in kind) to various cultural organizations and agencies.

would not have been realized.”⁵⁸⁹ This statement recognized the lobby efforts of the local arts community and positioned the city as a facilitator rather than a leader. In other words, the City would not take the lead on resolution of the issues it had identified. Further elaboration of this diversification of responsibility and multiple relationships for enactment themes were detailed in the policy’s “Principles”, which stated that

... the Corporate Cultural Policy has been developed with regard to five basic principles: partnerships,⁵⁹⁰ self-reliance,⁵⁹¹ awareness and appreciation,⁵⁹² excellence,⁵⁹³ and access.⁵⁹⁴ These principles set the tone for the Policy. They identify benchmarks that have become established in both the Department’s and the City’s way of doing business.⁵⁹⁵

Of special note within these Principles was the lack of pragmatic action items.

Although the policy alluded to the local community’s long-standing needs for cultural facilities, new and innovative cultural programs, funding, and support mechanisms to meet the needs of the cultural community, and effective planning and

⁵⁸⁹ OCA, Ottawa, *Minutes*, 5 October 1988, p. 23-95.

⁵⁹⁰ Under Attachment I, of the Corporate Cultural Policy of the City of Ottawa, section “Principles”, subsection “Partnerships” states: “The City of Ottawa recognizes that it is one agency among many that is responsible for local cultural development, and acknowledges that it must cooperate with its partners. The City wishes to ensure that its policies, programs and services are compatible and complimentary with those offered by its partners, and that future efforts in cultural development are maximized through cooperative partnerships.” Of particular note is the lack of explanation as to who the “partners” are.

⁵⁹¹ Under Attachment I, of the Corporate Cultural Policy of the City of Ottawa, section “Principles”, subsection “Self-Reliance” states: “The City is firmly committed to the concepts of community self-determination and self-reliance and will assist its partners in achieving this desired state.”

⁵⁹² Under Attachment I, of the Corporate Cultural Policy of the City of Ottawa, section “Principles”, subsection “Awareness and Appreciation” states: “The City of Ottawa has a role in facilitating and enhancing the public’s awareness and appreciation of a local cultural identity. In fulfilling this role, there will be an enrichment of the individual and the municipality.”

⁵⁹³ Under Attachment I, of the Corporate Cultural Policy of the City of Ottawa, section “Principles”, subsection “Excellence” states: “The City of Ottawa respects the creative efforts of individuals and groups in their pursuit of excellence at all level of local cultural activity.”

⁵⁹⁴ Under Attachment I, of the Corporate Cultural Policy of the City of Ottawa, section “Principles”, subsection “Access” states: “The City of Ottawa has a role in ensuring public access to cultural services.”

⁵⁹⁵ OCA, Ottawa, *Minutes*, 5 October 1988, p. 23-95.

implementation [strategies]⁵⁹⁶ the policy's approval came with caveats and was one not of practicality but of principle. It had no funding attached.

The City of Ottawa Chief Administrative Officer Alcide DeGagné proclaimed the level of civic commitment when he stated, in the policy's final comment, that "This report does not commit the City to any immediate Capital or Operating Budget expenditures."⁵⁹⁷

Although the Corporate Cultural Policy indicates that the City will consider action in a number of cultural areas, initiatives requiring financing will first be assessed in light of other corporate priorities and any requests for funding will be forwarded annually for Council review through the City's strategic management process. In addition, the City will seek other financing partners whenever possible to assist it with the achievement of its objectives. Thus, the City's financial commitment in relation to the Corporate Cultural Policy will be subject to current corporate priorities and available resources.⁵⁹⁸

The policy stated that other corporate priorities were to be considered first, as were available resources, and the goals for the cultural community were to be achieved chiefly in conjunction with other partners. With no funds, the policy appeared impotent, but as Maria de Falco, one of the policy's authors, stated, the policy would be

... a legitimizing tool that would allow us to go back to council for funding at a future date. Council approval of principles gave the municipal cultural interests a political mandate, which they didn't have before. If the policy sat before Council with funding attached, it would have sunk. This was the only way.⁵⁹⁹

The city's 1988 cultural policy passed because the arts community was well organized, there was an informed element within the municipal cultural bureaucracy, some reform members were still on council, and there was a sense of prosperity in the

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid., under sub-section "The Cultural Community in Ottawa."

⁵⁹⁷ OCA, Ottawa, *Minutes*, 5 October 1988, p. 23-98.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 23-96.

⁵⁹⁹ Maria de Falco (City of Ottawa Department of Recreation and Culture, Curator/Manager of Art in Public Places, Special Projects and Arts Policy Officer), interview by author, Ottawa, Ontario, 23 August 2004.

city. The curious nature of the city's 1988 policy was thus less a declaration of a bold new initiative than a recognition of a *fait accompli*; a new responsibility thrust on a reluctant municipality by a modern community that looked to its government for more than just water, sewers and roads.

Conclusion

The 1986 to 1988 period was a contradictory time. Qualitative and quantitative surveys were undertaken by the RMOC and by the City of Ottawa to ascertain the state of the arts in the region and in Ottawa. The surveys revealed a discrepancy between what the public and the local arts sector wanted, and what the federal, provincial, regional and municipal governments were prepared to give to Ottawa (and the region). They found increased citizen demand for local cultural products, increased realization of the value of culture as an economic generator (through cultural tourism) and increased interest in governments that culture (in principle) had a legitimate place in urban life.

At the same time, it was disclosed that only one to six per cent of all arts groups in the Ottawa region received any government support in terms of funding, and the funding received amounted to only one to six per cent of total budget for those groups. Most received no assistance and made do as they could. Ottawa had no civic facilities designed for performing arts or visual arts exhibition purposes. Visiting artists did not visit because they had no place to perform or show. The local sector had to work in market conditions, and compete against federally funded cultural institutions for funding, audience, volunteers, media interest, and sponsorship. The RMOC diverted

approximately 50% of all possible funds to the NAC as it received the majority of RMOC funds.⁶⁰⁰

Paradoxically, the general opinion of the country was that Ottawa was cultured, and that the city was over-endowed with national museums, National Gallery and the NAC, all paid for at the taxpayers' expense but available largely only to Ottawa citizens. There was a feeling that it was a "fat cat city."⁶⁰¹ But for a local artist, to get a show at the National Gallery or at the NAC was nearly impossible. Ekos referred to this as the "exclusion of the middle [...]" where instead of having region-wide cultural facilities at the top echelon of the region, there were instead national elite facilities. [...] This meant that there was a tremendous chasm separating the bottom and top levels of Ottawa's cultural ladder."⁶⁰² In 1988, 25 per cent of local professional artists were planning to leave the city for better employment options elsewhere. Ottawa lacked a regional arts infrastructure that supported the professional (and amateur) level.

Nonetheless, Ottawa was considered a leader in Canadian municipal cultural policy design and planning. Ottawa's corporate cultural policy was, in the words of Don M. Gamble, Commission of Recreation and Culture, "one of the first to be adopted by a municipal Council" and as such was "used as a blueprint for other municipal cultural policies across the country."⁶⁰³ Accepted under Ottawa Mayor Durrell's conservative regime, who as a mayor was characterized as "obsessed with making [Ottawa] into the sports capital of the country and who would rather see a lateral pass than an *arabesque*,

⁶⁰⁰ Ekos, p. i.

⁶⁰¹ Anderson, p. 1336.

⁶⁰² Ibid.

⁶⁰³ Don M. Gamble, Commissioner of Recreation and Culture, *Foreword to A Cultural Policy for the City of Ottawa*.

and a triple A baseball team than a new theatre company,”⁶⁰⁴ it, to the municipality, marked the beginning of a new attitude. In Gamble’s words, it was to “accommodate the changing needs of the community in the future.”⁶⁰⁵ For Ottawa artists, it was accepted with cautious praise.

⁶⁰⁴ Anderson, p. 1336.

⁶⁰⁵ Gamble, Commissioner of Recreation and Culture, *Foreword to A Cultural Policy for the City of Ottawa*.

CONCLUSION

From 1939 to 1988, Ottawa's visual and performing arts sector fought to obtain the necessary supports for a local culture in the national capital. It was an uphill battle that yielded only limited results. There was an assumption, within the national capital context of Ottawa, that the local arts sector was vulnerable and perhaps incapable of autonomy, and this "lead to the idea that the locality must surrender itself to the nation whenever the nation demands."⁶⁰⁶

What can be concluded from that assumption? The cultural history of the City of Ottawa validated that maxim. There was a complexity of cultural relationships in the capital and their historical interaction over time marked a trend whereby the local visual and performing arts community's recognition diminished in inverse proportion to the growth of the national.

The seven chapters of this historical chronology represent three major stages of local Ottawa arts sector development: development not in an evolutionary sense of constant improvement but in a model of advance and retreat, advantage and disadvantage. The first stage, from 1939 to 1967, (Chapters One to Three) represents a "pre-professional state," where Ottawa's first flush of cultural independence within the context of the national capital emerged almost as a pre-professional program. The local sector was in many ways in the forefront of Canadian professional artistic development. Prior

⁶⁰⁶ The author, political theorist Warren Magnusson, was in fact discussing in this quotation the position of vulnerability and the loss of political, economic and social autonomy when larger nations overwhelm and make decisions for smaller nations, such as the federal government deciding the fate of the Cree in Northern Quebec. What occurs is a marginalization of interests, and loss of independence by the smaller body. The situation in Ottawa of the local arts community in relationship to the larger municipality or the federal government was similar in context: establishment of an arts sector in Canada was difficult enough, given Canada's position in the arts marketplace, but was made nearly impossible in the face of competition not from other municipal arts sectors, but from the federal government. Magnusson, pp. 54 – 55.

to the Second World War, the majority of artistic effort in Canada was amateur, because the market, overwhelmed with foreign arts products, could not sustain a professional Canadian arts program. The country's arts labour force was small, and its system of cultural production, distribution and consumption was limited because of Canada's vast geography and undeveloped arts infrastructure (facilities, funding, promotion).

But during the War, Ottawa artists had the best employment options in the country. Local amateurs benefited from the tuition of government-employed artists (trained outside of the country) and the opportunity of this local in-Canada training led to the development of an indigenous arts labour force in the city of amateur, semi-professional and professional artists. The environment was conducive to the formation of Canada's first post-war, professional theatre companies. The municipality was poised as a cultural leader and established Canada's first cultural recreation programs, within the new model of recreation centres. The placement of progressive cultural recreationalists with a strong resident arts labour force led to the creation of one of Canada's first arts councils in Ottawa, which provided direction and acted as an intermediary between the sector and the government(s). Self-promotion in turn led the way to the formation of summer long arts festivals that profiled local artists, and introduced local citizens to this newly and more widely available product of "Canadian" art. The advantages of artistic life in the capital city during this period were two-fold: artists came to Ottawa because there was pride of place in the city, and it was assumed that if you lived here, you were working with the best artists in the country.

Disadvantages were minor in comparison: the federal government had demolished Ottawa's last commercial performance hall (Russell Theatre) in 1928 to make way for

Confederation Square, and the subsequent Depression and then the Second World War did not provide the incentive to rebuild. The city thus had a deficit of facilities for arts performance, but there were hopes that post war prosperity would return the city to its early twentieth century cultural glory. This did not happen. Professional theatre attempts to establish and maintain a commercial arts market in the city failed due in large part to the city's lack of facilities built for the purpose of arts performance (and exhibition). Secondly, the repositioning of recreational cultural activities from its own autonomous municipal section to within the broader mandate of athletic recreation was also a drawback, and meant a lessening ability of the sector to develop as well as in an environment not fettered by other interests. But the advantages of capital city culture compensated and the theatre companies' efforts laid the foundation for further arts entrepreneurial enterprises.

Centennial Year was a pivotal time. Ottawa's cityscape and culturescape changed dramatically. On the one hand, through federal Centennial Commission events, artistic opportunities increased for local arts performers and exhibitors. On the other, Centennial Year changed the odds, and the emphasis on national rather than local efforts marginalized the local arts sector's efforts. Where in other cities Centennial funds provided capital, operating and project grants to establish permanent cultural facilities and establish a civic arts infrastructure for future urban arts development, in Ottawa, both the municipal and federal governments contrived to destroy the windfalls acquired earlier. Thus, the imposition of short term Centennial federal programming with a disinterest in local efforts, coupled with the municipal destruction of the last of Ottawa's performing arts venues (except for those in educational or religious institutional venues)

meant the sector reversed course. It lost the advantage as other municipalities gained theirs.

Following Centennial Year, the chasm widened. What developed was a “missing middle” situation – the city supported a large base of amateurs on the bottom and supported the national elite institutions on the top, but no support was created for what would be, in any other city, the top level, regional professionals. Into this beleaguered backdrop (of no civic arts facilities and no civic arts infrastructure) opened the \$46 million, state-of-the-art National Arts Centre. While audiences rejoiced, the local arts sector went into shock. From 1968 until the end of 1973 (Chapter Four), local artists tried to regain their former position but ultimately this pursuit led nowhere, for they had to compete with both the NAC and the National Gallery, which drew away audiences, volunteers, media interest, and corporate support. A double standard emerged whereby Ottawa was presumed to be “cultured” and didn’t require government assistance such as that provided by government to other local municipalities. It was a context and a contest that could not be won by the resident arts sector. The period was symbolic that perception did not meet reality. It was a time of despair, set between the optimism of the earlier period and the pessimism and promise of the next.

The final period, 1974 to 1988 (Chapter Five to Seven) witnessed a turning point in the city’s political-cultural life. Resident arts professionals, building on the efforts of earlier pioneers, worked to carve out a space and establish a local arts industry. They were thwarted continuously. Beginning in 1974, the municipal government and the regional government provided the NAC with millions of dollars in grants of local tax

money. Ottawa became the only city in the country to sponsor a national institution. Perhaps the feeling initially by the arts granting bodies (the municipality of Ottawa in 1974, the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton (RMOC) from 1974 to 1988, etc.) was that the NAC supported the local arts industry and should be thus rewarded. But the truth was that it drew away approximately fifty per cent of all available moneys with which local artists could have developed the sector. The conclusion could be drawn that both the municipal and federal governments considered the local arts sector a nuisance and considered it irrelevant to the larger national cultural purpose, which provided more professional fare. A double standard emerged whereby the local became judged by the national. Ottawa's first grassroots political-cultural alliance formed to combat this practice and the municipality was petitioned to intervene in this situation. In despair but undaunted, artists continued to fight for their place in the city, but conditions worsened. No one listened to the arts sector's claims of unfair practice. No arts infrastructure investment in facilities, long term funding, or promotion was made by the municipality. The province considered the city to be well endowed and able to take care of itself; the federal looked after its own interests. The NAC, by acceptance of local tax funds, worked actively against the local sector. Dozens of attempts were made to create an atmosphere conducive to arts industry development similar to other similarly sized urban centres in Canada. These failed frequently.

It was not until the advent of reform mayor, Mayor Marion Dewar that the process of municipal policy development for long-term civic investment began. Dewar listened to the arts sector's litany about ad hoc funding, lack of civic arts facilities, and promotional efforts focused only on national activities. She regarded these claims as

legitimate. Under her regime, which privileged human rather than economic interests, she and the sector worked collaboratively to re-establish the sector to its former arts leadership position. Local arts festivals, an arts council, the creation of one of Canada's first public art programs, and the establishment of Canada's first municipal visual arts policy, occurred. Innovative capital, operating and programming funding schemes resurrected hope that a permanent Ottawa arts industry would develop. This was supplemented by a new market interest in cultural tourism. There remained a salient need for arts facilities, funding, promotion, and education and training opportunities, but these drawbacks to development were under investigation.

With the election in 1986 of a conservative council, the process of arts sector-municipal development in the national capital context returned to a reactive rather than a proactive stance. Only under a reform council were great strides made, which gave evidence that the sector was capable, if given the tools for development. The arts were labour intensive and prospects for productivity gains were limited. The presumption was that the government would provide what the market could not. Despite the advantage of increased arts sector size and audience interest, and the provision of qualitative and quantitative studies that demonstrated Ottawa's cultural lack, which diminished the sector's ability to contribute economically, socially and culturally to the community, municipal undercapitalization became *de rigueur*. When the arts sector tried to lever corporate and government support, the latter awaited the former and created a Catch-22 situation.

The municipal cultural policy of 1988 was an endpoint to a process. How should that process be judged? The arts advocates who fought for it envisioned an arts cultural

policy that would “achieve an awareness, positive understanding and recognition of a *local* cultural identity.”⁶⁰⁷ When it was being formulated it appeared that it would do this, and was a policy of both principles and practicalities. But ultimately, the 1988 corporate cultural policy for culture offered no funding and no solutions for its most central dilemma. It typified the municipality’s lack of vision and its decades’ long stance of neglect. It was, in effect, simply recognition that there was a problem.

From 1939 to 1988, Ottawa’s visual and performing arts sector worked industriously to create a local cultural *milieu* within the capital, but its remained hobbled in its efforts by the bias towards federal institutions – by the overwhelming emphasis on national institutional artistic development as opposed to a local. The sector was vulnerable because of the unusual national capital cultural competition condition and the assumption was made that it was inferior, in comparison to that standard. The locality tried to develop with that context, but ultimately, the policy was representative of a long-standing trend and surrender was symbolic of the time.

⁶⁰⁷ OCA, Ottawa, *Minutes*, 5 October 1988, p. 23-94.

APPENDIX I: INTERVIEWS

Andrew, Caroline (former member of the Board of the Ottawa-Carleton Social Planning Council). Interview with author. Tape recording. 7 January 2004.

Annis, Susan (former Council for the Arts in Ottawa, President of the Board of Directors). Interview with author. Tape recording. 19 August 2004.

Busby, Cathy (Ottawa Art Gallery, Public Programs Director). Interview with author, 2 October 2004.

Clark, Barbara (conductor, Ottawa Regional Youth Choir, former conductor, Central Children's Choir of Ottawa). Interview with author. Tape recording. 26 January 2004. 731-5224.

Conlon, Arthur (co-founder of Coon Hollow Studios, SAW Gallery). Interview with author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 21 January 2004.

Crawley, Michal and Rod Crawley (daughter and son of Budge and Judy Crawley). Two interviews by author, telephone conversations, Ottawa, Ontario, 25 May 2004.

Crowder, Eleanor (professional actor, producer, dramaturge, and former high school drama teacher). Interview with author, Ottawa, Ontario, 9 February 2004. 235-8858. Eleanor Crowder

Currie, David (former NACO member, current conductor of OSO). Interview with author. Ottawa, Ontario, 20 January 2004.

de Falco, Maria (former City of Ottawa Department of Recreation and Culture, Curator/Manager of Art in Public Places, Special Projects & Arts Policy Officer). Interview with author, Ottawa, Ontario, 23 August 2004.

Dewar, Marion (former City of Ottawa Mayor). Interview with author, Ottawa, Ontario, 2 September 2003.

Doucet, Clive (City of Ottawa councillor). Interview with author, Ottawa, Ontario, 3 December 2003.

Durr, Pat (former president of CARO, professional artist). Interview with author, Ottawa, Ontario, 5 April 2003.

Egervari, Tibor (retired professor, University of Ottawa theatre department). Interview with author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 21 December 2004.

Fox, Robert (former Chief of Staff for Mayor Marion Dewar, 1979 – 1985). Interview with author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 11 February 2004.

Garner, John (co-founder of Coon Hollow Studios, SAW Gallery). Interview with author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 21 January 2004.

Glatt, Harvey (owner of Le Hibou, and founder and owner of Treble Clef record store, Bass Clef concert promotion agency, and CHEZ 106 radio station). Interview with author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 15 January 2004.

Hampson, Garth (former RCMP Band member). Interview with author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 23 February 2004.

Haydon, Andy (former RMOC chairman). Interview with author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 8 December 2003.

Hodgins, Merrilee (co-founder Ottawa School of Dance). Interview with author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 19 January 2004.

Holden, Elizabeth (Ottawa Little Theatre Office Administrator). Interview with author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 10 May 2004.

Johnston, Gordon (choirmaster and organist at St. John's Anglican Church on Elgin Street). Interview with author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 13 January 2004.

Keillor, Elaine (Carleton University music professor). Interview with author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 16 December 2003. 520-2600 x 3732.

Lafranchise, David (Canadian Centennial Choir archivist and former president). Interview with author, Ottawa, Ontario, 23 March 2004.

Lafrenière, Pierre-Paul (former owner of Le Hibou, co-founder of Ottawa Festival of the Folks). Interview with author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 10 December 2003.

Loeb, Faye (professional artist, entrepreneur). Telephone interview by author, tape recording, Naples, Florida to Ottawa, Ontario, 5 February 2004.

MacLellan, Kathy and John Nolan (co-artistic directors and founders of the Rag and Bone Puppet Theatre). Telephone interview with author, Ottawa, Ontario, 14 July 2004.
Rag Bone

McGregor, Arthur (co-founder of Ottawa Folk Festival). Interview with author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 15 January 2004.

Meggs, Peter (former CBC Ottawa Regional Director). Interview with author, Ottawa, Ontario. 31 May 19 2004.

Milliken, Joan (former University of Ottawa Music Department accompanist and teacher), Interview with author, 9 January 2004

Milne, Jim (former conductor of the Governor General's Foot Guards Band, retired Woodroffe High School music teacher). Interview with author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario. 20 January 2004.

Milner, Arthur (GCTC playwright, actor, producer). Interview with author, tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario. 14 June 2004.

O'Brien, Joe (City of Ottawa, Department of Recreation and Culture, Director of Cultural and Senior Adult Services Branch). Interview with author, Ottawa, Ontario, 23 August 2004.

Roy, Janet (retired NACO player, professional singer and violinist). Interview with author. Tape recording, Kanata, Ontario, 25 May 2004.

Southam, Gordon Hamilton (businessman, diplomat, initiator of National Arts Centre). Interview with author. Tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 12 January 2004.

Stellick, Jeff (Executive Director, Ottawa School of Art). Interview with author. Tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario. 2 June 2004.

Stevens, Bill (owner of Crawley Films). Interview with author. Tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario, 2 February 2004.

Ure, Susanne (former City of Ottawa Culture Division staff). Interview with author. Tape recording, Ottawa, Ontario. 12 December 2003.

Van Dine, Aline (professional actress). Interview with author. Tape recording. Ottawa, Ontario. 20 February 2004.

Van Dine, Robert (professional singer, conductor, adjudicator). Interview with author. Tape recording. Ottawa, Ontario. 20 February 2004

Weisbord, Armand (professional violinist). Interview with author. Tape recording. Ottawa, Ontario. 11 May 2004.

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