



## Canadian Dance Assembly L'Assemblée canadienne de la danse

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### **END OF TRADE ROUTES AND PROMART CULTURAL FUNDING PROGRAMS THREATENS END OF CANADA ABROAD**

The Canadian Dance Assembly strongly objects to the Conservative government's recent decision to end two key cultural funding programs, a decision which undermines the promotion of Canadian art and culture to the world, and directly contradicts the government's avowed commitment to support the competitive export of Canadian products.

The two programs were the Trade Routes program at the Department of Canadian Heritage and the PromArt program at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. The \$9 million Trade Routes program contributed to initiatives by Canadian arts and cultural entrepreneurs such as Eponymous, Atlantic Presenters Association and Fondation de danse Margie Gillis to develop and pursue long-term export strategies. The \$4.7 million PromArt program helped bring international buyers to Canada and helped offset touring costs for Canadian dance companies like Compagnie Marie Chouinard, Alberta Ballet, Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Corpus, Coleman Lemieux & Company, Company Erasga Dance Society and les Grands Ballets Canadiens to perform for audiences in countries as varied as the Netherlands, France, Spain, Columbia, Mexico, South Korea, Taiwan, Serbia, Italy, Australia, Ireland, Bosnia, Turkey, Croatia, Japan, Germany and the United States.

"It's catastrophic for us," says Alain Dancyger, Executive Director of les Grands Ballets Canadiens which recently toured this month to Paris, France with the assistance of the PromArt program and has already received international bookings now as a result of that tour. "But beyond our own survival, this decision makes no sense on many levels. At a time when Canadian culture is extremely dynamic and is in demand all over the world, this decision kills the cultural 'carte de visite' for our embassies which need culture to lobby and to do business, fails to take advantage of this golden opportunity to capitalize on the private and public investments made to the arts over the years, and even goes against the internal recommendations of the government."

It goes without question that the Trade Routes and PromArt programs have helped sell Canadian artistic and cultural products to buyers and markets worldwide and helped cement Canada's reputation abroad as a country that places a high value on achievement and innovation. The cancellation of these programs threatens the ability of Canadian artists to represent Canada on the world stage and seriously undermines the ability of the Canadian arts sector to compete fairly in the global marketplace and to continue to grow earned revenues.

Jim Smith, Producer of Eponymous in B.C. and President of the Canadian Dance Assembly sums it up: "The loss of both of these programs will have a significant impact on the export aspect of the Canadian cultural sector in terms of the business of developing international markets. Speaking from personal experience, I can attest that the Trade Routes and PromArt programs have contributed to Canadian dance artists, companies and agents developing international presentation opportunities and consequently international audiences for Canadian dance offerings. Aside from the economic impact of the cuts on the cultural sector, the even greater loss to all Canadians will be the disappearance of



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Canada from the international stages of the world. Put simply, it will just be that much harder to share with the world the richness and diversity of the Canadian experience."

The CDA urges the government to reinvest in the export of Canadian art as a vital component of public diplomacy and a critical strategy for competing in the global economy.

Representing 250 arts organizations and arts professionals, the Canadian Dance Assembly is the voice of the professional dance sector in Canada. CDA connects members with their peers across the country, facilitates dialogue, exchange and networks, and advocates on behalf of its membership for a healthy, sustainable environment in which professional dance practice can grow and thrive.

[www.dancecanada.net](http://www.dancecanada.net)

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