



Supplementary Report on Rural and Northern Canada

The Value of Presenting: A Study of Arts Presentation in Canada

www.valueofpresenting.ca

May 2012

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Contents

Canadians in Small Communities Engaged with Arts But Less Access	3
Attendance in 2011: Lower in smaller places	3
Programming	3
Watching Performing Arts in Media in 2011: Similar to average	4
Presenters Report Robust Total Attendance	5
Community Benefit is Greatest.....	6
Canadians and Presenters Share Similar Views on Benefits.....	7
Importance and Benefits of Facilities Are Clear to Canadians.....	8
Venue Rentals Dominate	8
Strong Partnerships.....	8
Structure, Volunteers and Funding	10
Background	11
Goals of the Project	11
Activities Undertaken.....	11
Data on Rural and Remote Communities	11
Performing Arts Have Always Been Part of Rural Life	12

This *Supplementary Report* summarizes the results of research and consultations we have completed in the first year of this two-year project with a focus on *Rural and Northern Canada*. Highlights have been presented in two webinars with 20 participants in rural and Northern communities. Their feedback has been incorporated here.

The detailed survey data tables are published online at <http://www.valueofpresenting.ca/documents>.

Acknowledgement

The Value of Presenting: A Study of Arts Presentation in Canada is made possible with the financial support of the Canada Council for the Arts, the government of Ontario, the Ontario Arts Council, and the government of Nova Scotia.

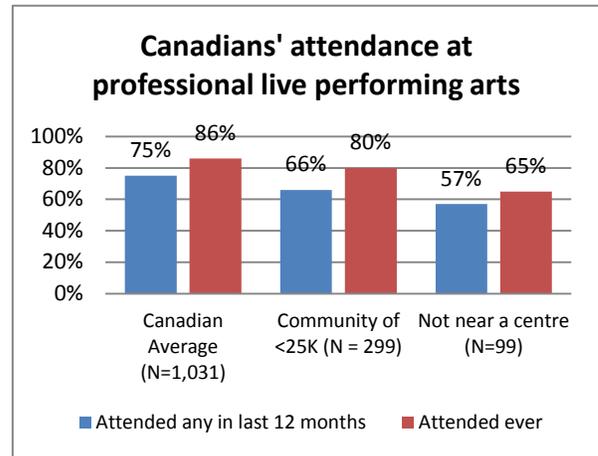
Canadians in Small Communities Engaged with Arts But Less Access

Attendance in 2011: Lower in smaller places

The *Value of Presenting Survey of the General Public* showed that 3 in 4 Canadians reported attending a live professional performing arts event in the last 12 months. This is the highest attendance ever measured and it is comparable to Statistics Canada's measure of over 72% obtained in its *2010 General Social Survey* (in terms of breadth of the population attending not frequency of attendance.)

We found that people in communities under 25,000 are somewhat less likely to have attended a performing arts event within the past 12 months (66%). 80% of these Canadians report having attended a performing arts event at any time in their lives, which is significantly lower than the 91% of those who live in cities over 100,000.

For Canadians living further than 70 km from a centre with professional performing arts attendance is even lower with 57% in the last year and 65% attending at any point in time, compared to 93% of Canadians living near a centre who reported having attended at some point in time.



Programming

Webinar participants wanted to know about programming in rural and Northern communities. Few differences compared to the national average exist: Presenters in communities under 5,000 present

	All (N=288)	<5K (N=70)	5K-99K (N=107)	100K+ (N=111)
Music/song writing	83%	91%	89%	73%
Theatre	58%	59%	67%	50%
Comedy/humour	51%	57%	60%	40%
Dance	55%	54%	61%	49%
Visual arts	43%	50%	41%	41%
Spoken word/storytelling	42%	47%	42%	40%
Variety	41%	33%	52%	35%
Film	33%	30%	36%	32%
Interdisciplinary arts (incl. circus)	39%	29%	39%	44%
Literature	23%	27%	24%	18%
Opera/musical theatre	29%	23%	42%	21%
Media arts	19%	14%	20%	22%
Other	9%	9%	4%	14%
Average of art forms / presenter	5.2	5.2	5.8	4.8

more music and less interdisciplinary arts, while other art forms presented (including non-performing arts) are similar to the overall averages.

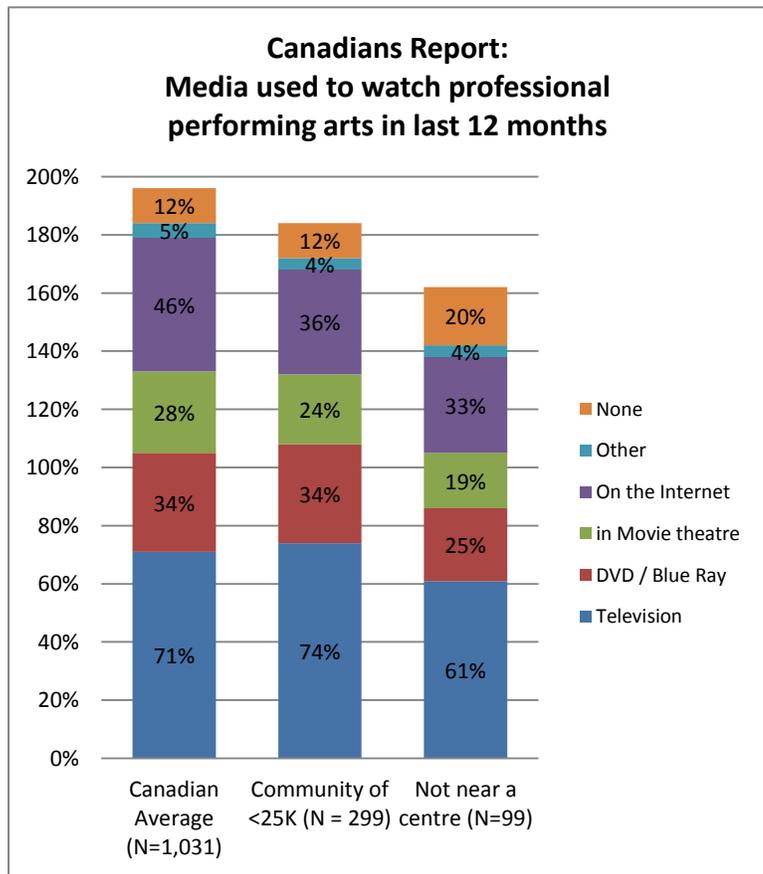
Canadians in all communities attend performances in a range of genres. However, the larger the community and the closer to a centre Canadians live the more different types of shows they attend. (This is likely related to availability.)

Watching Performing Arts in Media in 2011: Similar to average

To understand whether this difference comes from access and availability to performing arts or from a genuine lack of interest, we examined data on media consumption of professional performing arts.

People in communities under 25,000 report viewing performing arts in a variety of media roughly the same level as other Canadians, except for the Internet. Only 36% report having watched performing arts performed by a professional artist in the past 12 month on the internet. As the size of the community increases, so does the use of the internet: 53% in communities between 25,000 and 99,000 and 49% in cities over 100,000 reported using it, for an overall average of 46%.

Canadians living further from a centre show a somewhat reduced media-based consumption. 20% report not having watched at all, compared to 12% Canadian average and average for communities under 25,000. Access to internet and movie houses is lower in the more rural/remote communities which explains the lower numbers.



This data shows, and webinar participants affirmed, that the differences in watching performing arts via media are far smaller than the differences observed relative to attendance. Therefore, we conclude that the lower attendance reported is due to access and availability to shows and not any lack of interest.

We found no significant difference in terms of the importance those who attend specific performing arts ascribe to their attendance, or the personal benefits they derive: First, entertainment and fun; second, emotional/ intellectual/ spiritual stimulation; third, learning something new.

Similarly, we found no difference to the Canadian average in terms of the 2:1 preference toward attending a live performing arts event over watching it via media. This again affirms the universal belief in live attendance being more important than - and different from - a media-based activity.

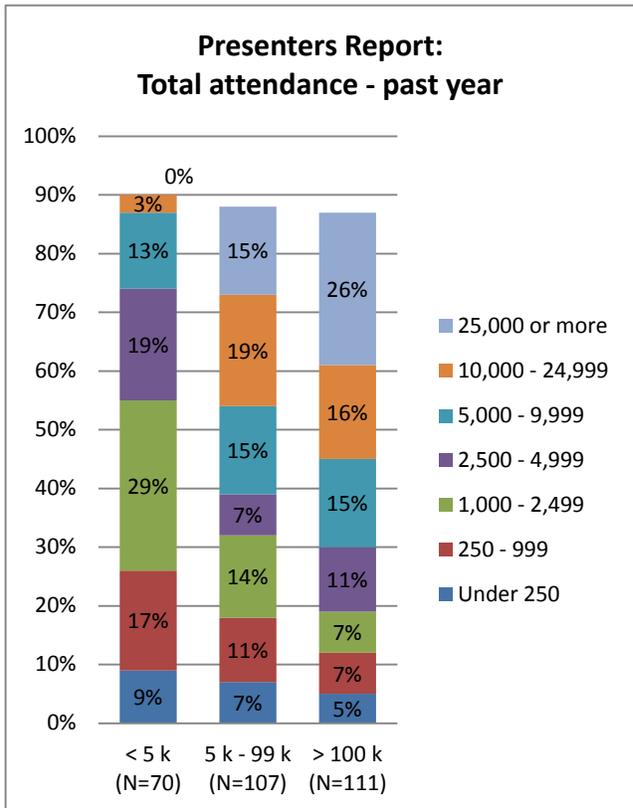
Several webinar participants pointed to the social interactions that happen when the community gathers together at a performance as a very important benefit of a live performance that cannot be replicated in another way.

Presenters Report Robust Total Attendance

We compared total attendance reported by presenters by size of communities¹. Attendance gravitates toward the 1,000 to 4,999 segment per year, with few reporting attendance over 10,000.

A worthwhile question considering the size of these communities (under 5,000) and the relative size of their total audience is: do presenters in smaller communities serve a greater proportion of their population? Or are these figures a reflection of higher frequency of attendance?

Furthermore for the 16% who report attendance over 5,000 people, which is more than their population, do these figures come from festivals or other events that have a large draw beyond their community and thus have a disproportionately positive social and economic impact in their community?



The webinar reactions suggested that this information would be of great interest to funders - and likely their community as well.

Several webinar participants highlighted that when they fill a community space for a performing arts event they might have 10% of their entire population attending; they pointed out that any presenter in a city would have a difficult time replicating that reach.

¹ The reason why attendance does not reach 100% is due to those presenters who said they didn't know what attendance was for their organization.

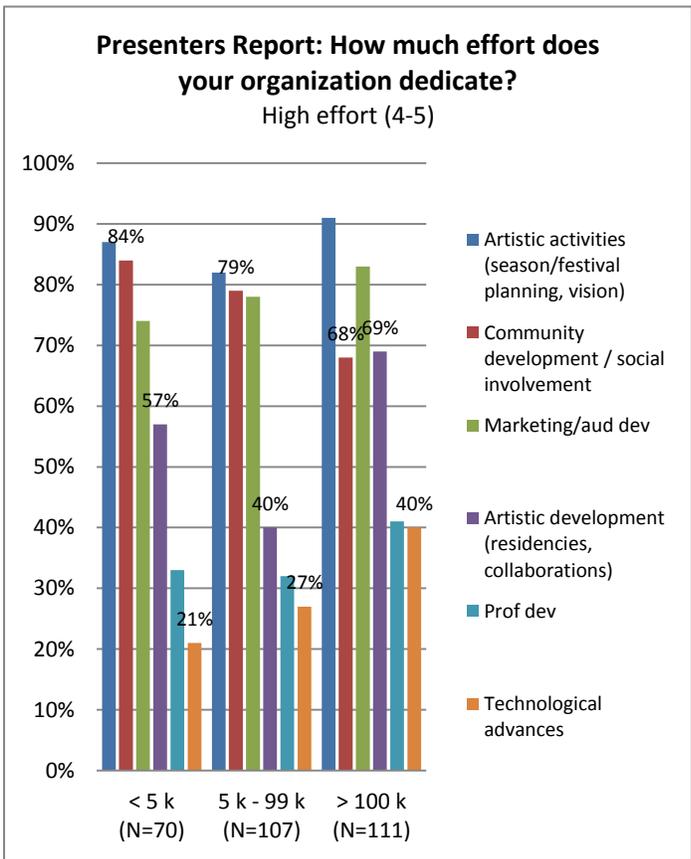
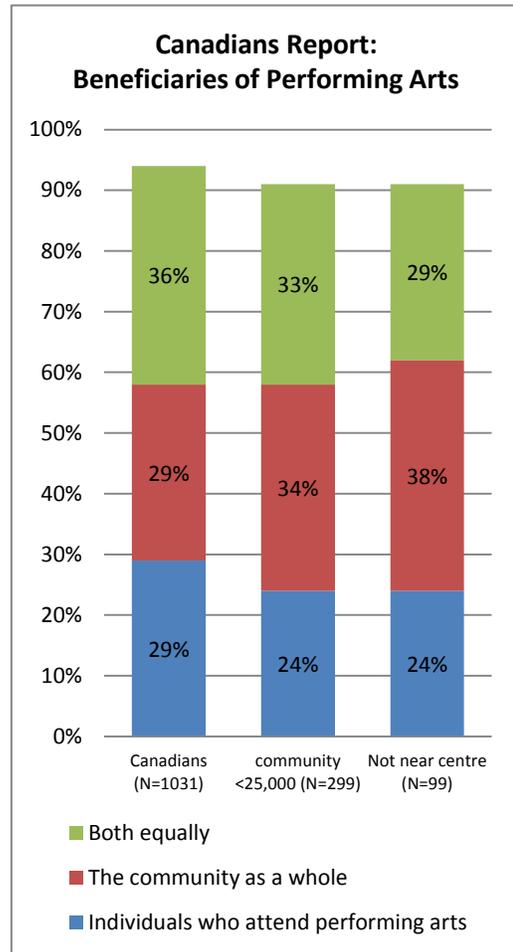
Community Benefit is Greatest

2 out of 3 Canadians believe that the community benefits more or as much as individual attendees from having professional performing arts in their community.

The smaller the community and the further away from a centre it is, the greater Canadians believe the community benefit is.

Indeed, we found that the individual benefits from attending tend to be less obvious to infrequent or non-attenders. However, these Canadians have no difficulty in seeing the community benefit.

This emphasis is congruent with the work presenters in smaller communities are focussed on, to a considerably higher level than their urban counterparts: community development and social involvement.



Most presenters spend the highest effort on their artistic activities.

Presenters in smaller communities also place nearly as much emphasis on helping artists develop as presenters in cities, but much more than presenters in medium sized communities.

Technological advances are receiving much less effort in smaller communities. This may partly be a function of a lack of dedicated facilities as well as different modes of marketing.

Webinar participants from the Northern territories spoke of their extensive use of online and social media in combination with word-of-mouth to share event and community information effectively.

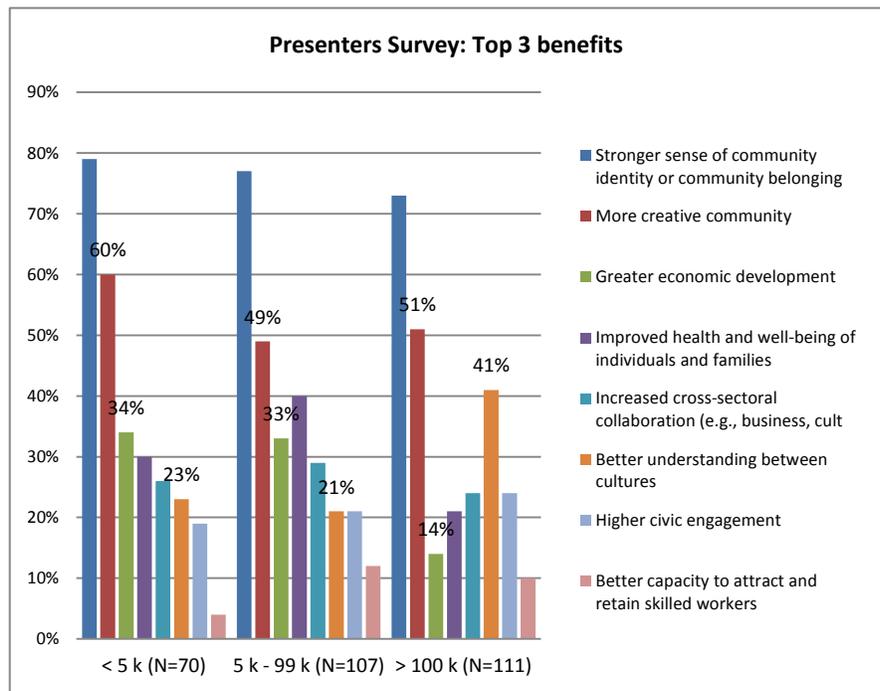
Canadians and Presenters Share Similar Views on Benefits

Like all presenters, those in small communities believe that the greatest benefits their organization contributes to their community is a 'stronger sense of community identity or community belonging' and a 'more creative community'.

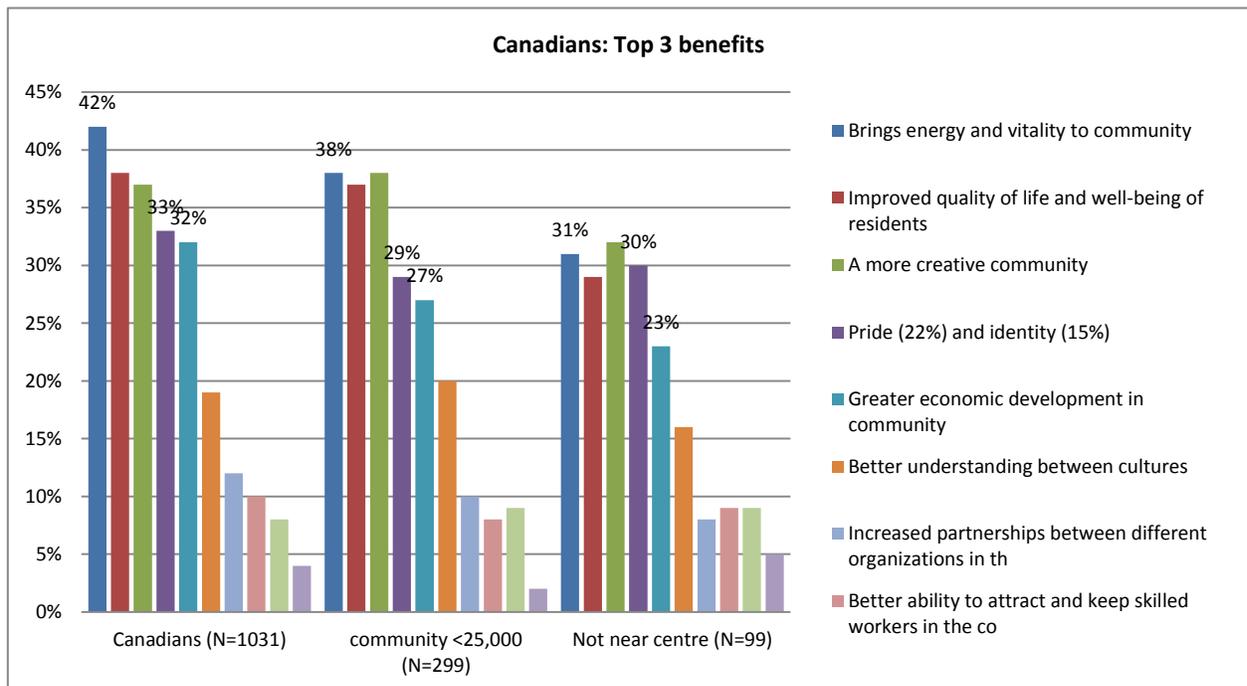
In smaller communities economic development is a greater benefit while cultural understanding is seen as a lesser benefit by these presenters compared to their urban counterparts.

For Canadians from different sizes of community, a similar range of benefits matters most.

Energy and vitality, a more creative community and improved quality of life and pride and identity are all leading benefits.



Comparing rural and remote Canadians only small differences in emphasis exist among Canadians not living near a centre.



Importance and Benefits of Facilities Are Clear to Canadians

Canadians have clear ideas of the importance of performing arts facilities in their communities, from quality of life and well-being to pride in community and economic development. Interestingly, the data showed no significant difference by size of community, even though the number of dedicated facilities is lower in smaller communities.

Venue Rentals Dominate

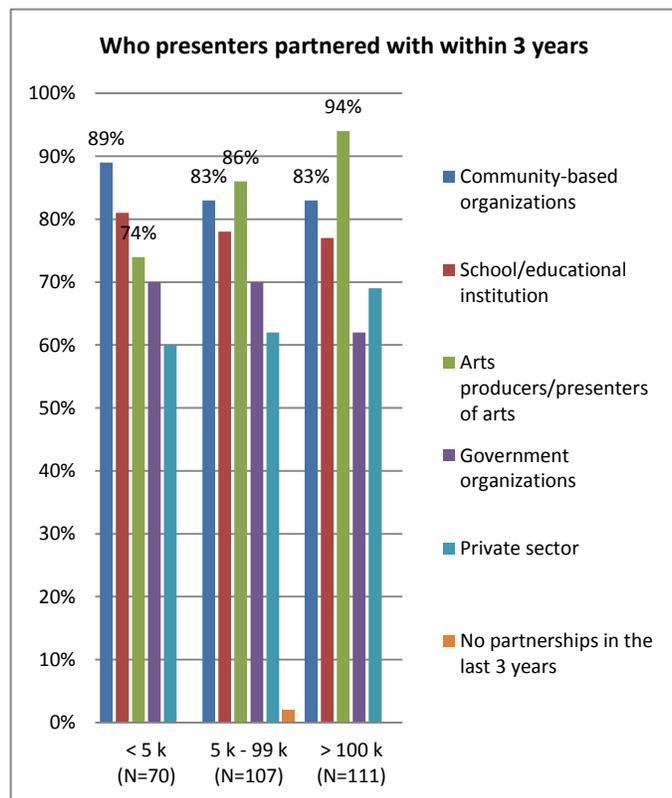
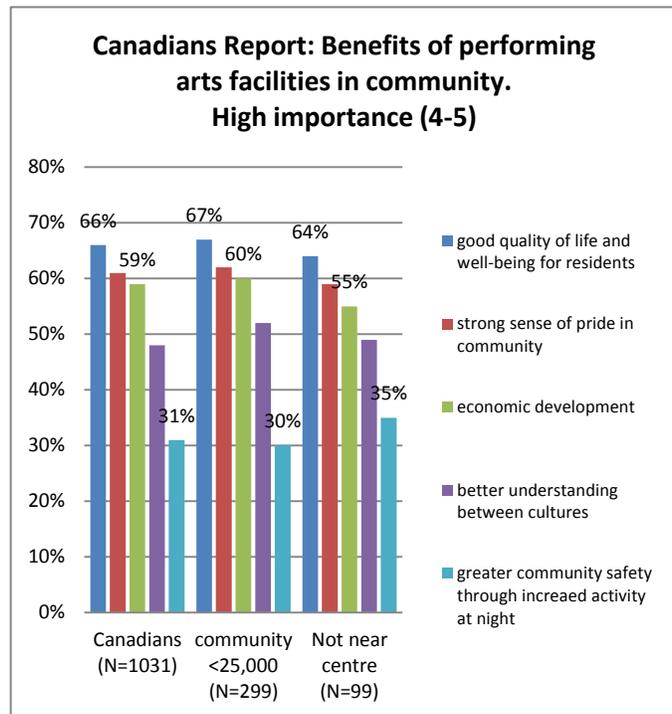
A small number of rural presenters owns/leases their venue (25% vs 53% in communities of 5,000 to 99,000 and 48% in cities over 100,000); 42% rent their venues (vs 24% and 32% respectively).

Few report using a mid-sized venue (500 to 999 seats), likely because they do not readily exist in rural communities. There are some large venues (likely outdoors) that rural communities can access; but by and large they use smaller venues.

Of the 58% who do not rent their venue 58% are planning some capital project. Their needs are similar to many other presenters in terms of renovations and acquiring specialized equipment. However, they do not expect to spend as much as their counterparts in larger communities. Only one presenter in a community under 5,000 reported planning on spending more than \$500,000, compared to 17 (or 45%) in cities over 100,000.

Strong Partnerships

89% in communities under 5,000 say that developing partnerships are very important in next 10 years but only 71% believe presenters play a large role in building partnerships in the community right now. Yet, 89% have partnered with community-based organizations in last 3 yrs. It appears as if the self-image of presenters in small communities lags their actual activities. In comparison, presenters in cities > 100,000 showed greater congruence: 81% reported partnerships as a priority and the same said they play role and 83% report partnering in last 3 years.



Community-based organizations and schools are the top two partners. Partnerships with other arts organizations and private sector are less important in smaller communities, which may have to do with availability. Similarly, in smaller communities there are fewer opportunities to partner with immigration and cultural diversity partners (15% vs 47% in cities over 100,000) and social services (15% vs 41% in cities over 100,000).

At several live *Value of Presenting Dialogues* rural and remote presenters shared their experiences. Exemplary are these comments from a group of presenters in the Yukon.

Rural and remote presenters felt the rewards of their work in terms of the community they built. Some talked about the rewards of seeing people in their community challenge themselves creatively and achieve something, through performing arts, they wouldn't have expected. Some talked about providing a safe space for performances – whether amateur or professional – and witnessing the performers' artistic growth and audiences' support and enjoyment.

These presenters see the arts in their community as expressions of who they are, bringing people together, having a dialogue and discovering things together, as beautiful ways to build community and individual expression. They see how performing arts presenting contributes to healthy communities, to community identity and pride, and how it provides a way to present their artists and stories both in and outside of the Northern territories.

Two specific examples related to a major venue, the Yukon Arts Centre (YAC) and another to cross-cultural engagement, the *Coming into the Light* festival. The YAC has transformed the possibilities of what can happen on stage by attracting people with a range of technical skills (design, lighting, etc.); this has unleashed new possibilities in terms of bringing in first-class artists and companies they couldn't have dreamt of hosting before. The 2011 debut of the "Coming into the Light" festival in Whitehorse was a significant example of First Nations sharing arts and cultural experiences and becoming more engaged in the arts community by showcasing Yukon First Nations artists and performers alongside artists from British Columbia, Northwest Territories, Greenland, and Alaska.

These sentiments are echoed in *Developing and Revitalizing Rural Communities through Arts and Creativity* by the Creative City Network of Canada:

"As rural communities re-envision and reposition themselves, they are seeking to revitalize, diversify their economic base, enhance their quality of life, and reinvent themselves for new functions and roles."

"The most successful community arts projects in rural settings enable the community to feel they are acquiring skill even as they are 'building social structures where they could give expression to their emotional and spiritual lives' (Brotman, cited by Canadian Cultural Observatory, 2007)."

"Touring offers access to high-quality professional productions, extends the range of work available in rural communities, and provides meaningful experiences for both presenters and audiences: Rural touring is not a poor substitute for the kind of experience offered by urban arts venues. It is qualitatively different in several respects. The facilities may not be as good, but the intimacy of the space, the opportunity to meet the performers, the fact that most of the audience know each other – these give a village hall show a unique power. Both artists and

audiences consistently feel that such shows are exciting, memorable and have a quality which is distinctively valuable. (Matarasso et al., 2004)”

Structure, Volunteers and Funding

- Most presenters in communities under 5,000 are not-for-profit organizations (96%) just like everywhere else in Canada.
- The majority of these presenters are series presenters (40%) and festivals (27%) with 23% electing “other”. Perhaps not surprising, government, specialized or school presenters are very rare, while bars and promoters play a slightly greater role as presenters.
- 79% of presenters in small communities say arts presenting is their primary mandate compared to the national average of 69%.
- Only 26% exclusively present shows produced by others, which is far less than the 47% of presenters in communities between 5,000 and 99,000 and the 38% in cities over 100,000. They do most often present shows by others but also produce some of their own (46% vs 33% vs 35% by size of community); and 29% mostly produce their own shows (vs 19% and 24% respectively).
- While they share as their number one concern the reliability of government funding (76%) with all presenters, rural presenters’ second most important concern is their dependence on volunteers with 53% (vs 27% and 13% respectively by size of community.) This makes sense considering that 39% of rural presenters have no staff at all for their day-to-day operations (vs 17% and 8% respectively) and 10% have no staff even during their peak times so they are completely volunteer run. When they do have staff for day-to-day operations it most often is small with between 1 to 4 people (47%).
- These presenters rely on a day-to-day volunteer complement of an average of 36. This increases to an average of 167, during the height of their operations.
 - The national average for day-to-day operations is 17 volunteers for each paid staff.
- Rural presenters’ budgets are the lowest with 61% under \$200,000 (vs 33% and 20% respectively by size of community). Their first source of funding comes from box office revenue (50%) followed by government grants (39%). This is the opposite of cities over 100,000 where for 52% the first source of funding is government followed by box office at 23%. In terms of government funding 50% of rural presenters say that their main source is provincial funding followed by 39% federal and 11% municipal. This make up is different in cities over 100,000 with 51% of presenters indicating federal funding as their main source followed by municipal (26%) and provincial (22%).
- Arts education is a concern for 64% of presenters in small communities which is slightly higher than for their counterparts in cities. 80% see young audience development and arts education as highly important for the presenting field in the next 10 years.

Webinar participants highlighted the role of volunteers: “Nothing would happen here without volunteers. That’s why we are so concerned with volunteer burn-out.” Organizing performing arts presentations is demanding work involving considerable skill. This places very large demands on a corps of volunteers to deliver professional performances in often less than adequate facilities.

The webinars affirmed that arts education is an area of considerable concern among presenters in small communities.

Background

On behalf of Canada's performing arts presenting networks we have been conducting the largest national study to-date in the presenting field. The study is spearheaded by the Canadian Arts Presenting Association (CAPACOA), in partnership with the regional presenting networks, and an advisory committee of sector representatives. The study activities have been undertaken by Strategic Moves in collaboration with EKOS Research Associates, beginning in May 2011 and expected to be completed in March 2013.

Goals of the Project

- To identify, understand and communicate the value and benefits of performing arts presentation for Canadians.
- To define the role of the presenter in the performing arts ecology, in communities and in the society with the next 20 years in mind.
- To raise awareness of this freshly defined role.

To achieve this, we explore live performing arts presentation from the diverse perspectives of artists, creators, producers, and managers as well as municipalities, people working in related sectors like health, social services or education, the public and presenters themselves.

Activities Undertaken

In order to gain engaged participation throughout this two-year project, we have been employing an action research framework where information is shared in draft form and feedback and input is encouraged on an ongoing basis. We have enabled participation by members of the presenting field using various modes, from phone interviews, to face-to-face dialogues and workshops, to Facebook, Twitter and a dedicated project website (www.ValueOfPresenting.ca).

This supplement is focused on:

- National *Survey of Performing Arts Presenters*, 288 respondents; report published in February 2012, including a French-language executive summary and detailed tables.
- National *Survey of Canadians*, 1,031 respondents; report published in March 2012, including a French-language executive summary and detailed tables.
- Dialogue sessions that included rural or Northern presenters at Alberta Showcase (Edmonton, AB), Breakout West (Whitehorse, YK), Contact East (Summerside, PEI).
- First reactions to *Highlights* presentation and requests for more information from the field.

Data on Rural and Remote Communities

The Value of Presenting Survey of General Public undertaken in winter 2012 included 299 interviews out of 1,031² with people living in communities under 25,000 – with about half of those living in communities under 5,000. We also obtained 99 interviews with people who live more than 70km from a centre where there is live performing arts. None were from people living in Northern territories, however we believe findings will largely mirror that experience. In this report we use these two subgroups to examine how these Canadians differ from Canadians in larger communities or urban areas.

² This survey's margin of error for the total sample is +/- 3.5%, for the 299 Canadians in small communities it is +/-5.7% and for the 99 Canadians further than 70 km from a centre it is +/-9.9%

Our *Survey of Performing Arts Presenters* achieved considerable participation from presenters located in communities under 5,000 people resulting in 70 responses which are 24% of the total sample³. 60% of these respondents are located in Western/Northern Canada, 24% in Eastern Canada, 13% in Ontario and 3% in Quebec.

According to Statistics Canada, rural Canadians make up a very large proportion of people in the three Northern territories and Atlantic Canada⁴. The four most populous provinces have a smaller proportion of their citizens living in rural areas, but due to their larger population, contribute significant absolute numbers.

Performing Arts Have Always Been Part of Rural Life

The performing arts in Canada have much deeper roots than one might expect. Long before European explorers came to Canada, aboriginal peoples had a rich, expressive artistic life including dance, theatre, storytelling, music – all inseparable from every aspect of life. These deep artistic traditions have been part of this land for millennia; they have been influencing contemporary Canadian culture and identity as well as being influenced by it. Nonetheless, development of theatre and performing arts in Canada was shaped by European rather than by indigenous traditions.

Almost certainly, the first documented theatrical performance, on land, in North America took place in Samuel de Champlain's settlement of Port Royal, in 1606. It was an amateur theatrical performance encouraged and funded by the governing body for the health and well-being of the people.

Plays were performed in colonial times by troops in taverns and public buildings. Concerts, modeled on London society's "soirée musicales", were presented in homes of newly arrived politicians and businessmen in the early 1800s. During the 1920s and 1930s there was a rise of community concert associations, the travelling Chautauquas festivals and Little Theatres that brought multi-faceted performances to communities of all sizes across Canada.

Probably the most important impetus to the development of Canada's performing arts came in 1951 with the Massey Report, which led to the creation of the Canada Council for the Arts in 1957. With greater government responsibility for arts funding in place, and Canada's Centennial celebrations, the 1960s saw huge growth in the founding of new theatres in virtually every city across Canada.

Regional Presenting Networks began to appear as early as 1968 in Saskatchewan. Understanding the need to bring artists and presenters together in order to support and coordinate touring activity, the Ontario Arts Council created Ontario Contact in 1971, the first Contact event in Canada. The Canada Council's Touring Office, established in 1973, further enhanced the Council's role to support performance and make the performing arts accessible to all Canadians. It created Contact East in 1975; the same year the Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils held its first Showcase.

As Canadians lives have shifted from largely rural to largely urban cultural activities have shifted as well. This *Supplementary Report* highlights the value and benefits of performing arts presentation to as Canadians and presenters in Canada's smaller and more remote communities see it today.

³ Due to not having a comprehensive list of presenters who qualified for the survey, we cannot make a statement on margin of error. Rather differences between groups who participated in the survey are measured.

⁴ Statistics Canada defines rural as a community of less than 1,000 and a density of population under 400 per square kilometre.