CAPACOA

2025-2026 Annual Report

Canada

Canada Council for the Arts | Conseil des arts du Canada

ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO
an Ontario government agency
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1 - Programs and Services

CAPACOA Conference 2025 : Age of Relevance



This year, CAPACOA was proud to hold its biennial conference in Ottawa from December 1-5, 2025. Celebrating its 37th year, with the theme “Age of Relevance” (finding meaning, new horizons for performing arts). With 320 presenters, agents, managers, artists and other performing arts professionals in attendance from across Canada and abroad, this was the most attended conference ever, and meaningful networking opportunities were available to all. Participants also experienced informative sessions and peer meetings alongside world-class theatre, music and dance showcases. The 5 day conference consisted of: professional development sessions; dine-arounds; cohort meetings; a knowledge café; one-on-one meetings; a climate-themed lunch and launch of the Climate Change Preparedness Program; artist pitches and showcases; networking opportunities; and peer sessions.

During the conference, CAPACOA highlighted 44 distinct artistic pieces ready for touring in venues of various sizes. The 20 artistic showcases and 24 pitches highlighted a range of disciplines and talents from across Canada, providing an inspiring variety of offerings to consider. While the majority of works featured Canadian talents, we made space for international voices to share their work and solidified our international partnerships; in particular, we secured international showcasing spots for Canadian artists in upcoming Australian and New Zealand-based performing arts conferences.

The Age of Relevance 2025 helped foster many meaningful business connections with colleagues from across Canada and around the world. Three of the professional development sessions were dedicated to AI and Digital Discoverability. The professional development sessions were designed to enhance delegate understandings of tools and resources that are available and relevant to our sector. The third session focused on fostering

environmental consciousness within the performing arts sector and the fourth promoted methods to better establish connections with Generation Z. In addition to these learning sessions, the Knowledge Café provided a more intimate setting for exchanging information and building relationships on a diverse range of topics brought forward by members of the sector.

Thanks to our spectacular funders, sponsors, supporters and partners, CAPACOA was able to connect industry professionals together, share knowledge, and bring forth discussions and ideas to positively impact the performing arts sector.



Showcases & Artist Presentations

For artist opportunities, there were 20 artist performances, consisting of 18 showcases by Canadian artists, 1 showcase by a New Zealand-based Maori dance group, and 1 by an Australian experimental theatre group. CAPACOA expanded the pitch sessions from the previous conference, providing 19 pitch opportunities for Canadians productions, and another 5 for international artists/artist productions. In total, CAPACOA highlighted 44 distinct artistic pieces to presenters, agents and touring organizations around Canada, leading to multiple bookings even within two weeks of the conference.



International and full length showcases were curated by an internationally aware and representative committee with attention towards fostering strong international ties, and culminated in a commitment from PAANZ to reserve showcase spots in their next performing arts conference. The standard showcases and pitch opportunities included 2 separate juries supported by CAPACOA staff and board members.

Both artist showcases and pitch presentations featured various artistic disciplines. Overall, CAPACOA featured 15 music, 8 dance, 2 circus, 2 clown, 13 theatre, and 5 independent participatory presentations.

Detailed information is available in the Annex of this report and our bilingual 2025 conference pages for Showcase Artists and Artist Pitches.

One-on-One Meetings

The one-on-one sessions were designed to give conference participants a formal context to engage in business discussions pertaining to the live performance industry. They were held on the third day of the conference to give delegates some time to organically form connections before talking business. It gave colleagues the chance to network one-on-one with the goal of having in-depth conversations with presenters, artists, agents, managers, and administrators that they would not have otherwise had the chance to meet. Topics within these ranged from booking seasons and specific shows, to exploring new audience markets and networking beyond current norms. This year, CAPACOA booked a record number of one-on-one meetings.

Number of meetings booked: 577 meetings booked for 135 attendees.

Professional Development Sessions

These informative sessions featured talks on a variety of subjects pertaining to the performing arts. Overall, CAPACOA held 6 over the course of two days of the conference. Each session had panelists, powerpoint presentations, open discussions and a Q&A period.

These sessions highlighted:

1) Industry Research: *Reframing the Value of Presenting: What's Changed, What Holds True, What's Next?*
2) Digital Discoverability: *Artsdata: Open Data Solutions for Event Discoverability*
3) Customer Relationships: *Re-imagining Customer Relationships: Strengthening Loyalty and Affiliation With Cultural Initiators*
4) Human Resources and People Systems: *Leading People in the Midst of Supreme Change*
5) International Markets and Development: *International Market Development Professional Development Session #1: CAPACOA's Approach to International Market Development*
6) International Markets and Development Debate: *The New World (Dis)Order: The Future of International Exchange and Collaboration*

Detailed information each session is available below and on our conference website



CAPAOCA Conference, 2025 - Knowledge Cafe, "international spaces" discussions

Knowledge Café

The Knowledge Café allowed conference participants to join small roundtable discussions to talk about various topics pertaining to the industry. These curated discussions, facilitated by industry experts, allowed small groups to share their experiences along a range of topics.

The event featured two rounds of discussions, with topics repeating in the second round. Each round accommodated up to 12 participants at each table. Attendees were encouraged to move between tables during the rounds to engage in different discussions. Each round began with facilitator introductions, followed by group discussions to share knowledge and insights.

KNOWLEDGE CAFE TOPICS

1. **“Board of Directors - Models and Challenges”** hosted by Jeanne LeSage, Founder of LeSage Arts Management and Angela Campbell, Executive Director, Imperial Theatre
2. **“Naming Rights”** hosted by Tim Yerxa, Executive Director, Fredericton Playhouse
3. **“Climate Change Initiative”** hosted by Ian Garrett, Professor of Ecological Design for Performance at York University and Erin Kennedy, Conference Coordinator, CAPACOA
4. **“AI Tools”** hosted by Inga Petri, Founder, Strategic Moves and Dessa Hayes, Digital Transformation Agent, CAPACOA
5. **“Care and Caregiving on Tour: Strategies for Presenters, Agents, and Artists”** hosted by Susie Burpee, Executive Director, Balancing Act and Pam Patel, Artistic Director, MT Space
6. **“Presenting From Place”** hosted by Denise Bolduc, Curator - Connector - Creative Producer and Nathan Mudge, Producer
7. **“RCR - Engaging Social Initiators”** hosted by Julia Felgner, National Communications and Special Projects Officer, CAPACOA and Élodie Santos, PhD student in Marketing at HEC Montréal
8. **“RCR - Rethinking Membership Models”** hosted by Renaud Legoux, Professor of Marketing at HEC Montréal
9. **“Explore South America”** hosted by Federico Irazabal, Festival Internatcional de Buenos Aires, Paula de Renor, RESIDE Festival, and Daniel A. Mikey, National Centre for the Arts (Colombia)
10. **“Explore Australia & New Zealand”** hosted by Katherine Connor, Director PAC Australia and Louise Gallagher, Director PANNZ
11. **“Explore the Nordic Region”** - hosted by Ragnheiður Skúladóttir, Lókal Performing Arts Reykjavík and Susanne Næss Nielsen, Festspillene i Nord-Norge
12. **“Explore Spain”** hosted by Marta Oliveres Tortosa, EL ÁLAMO Creative Management
13. **“Explore South Korea”** hosted by Yena Kang, Korea Arts Management Service and Dongho Shin, Korean Culture and Arts Centers Association (KoCACA)

Comments from Canadian delegates

“I want to take this opportunity to thank you and applaud your generosity, toward strengthening our sector of artists and arts workers in Canada. I know how much care, effort, and complexity goes into creating a space like this, and it is anything but easy. Your commitment to fostering connection, visibility, and meaningful dialogue is deeply appreciated. Thank you for everything you do.” **– Survey Participant 7**

“The one-on-one meetings were extremely well organized – far better than what I have experienced at other conferences. I really appreciated how we could grade our interest through the Zoom system; it was very efficient.” **– Survey Participant 10.**

“This conference is so important to connecting the presentation ecology from across the country. It is vital for the sector to meet, share and learn from each other.” **– Survey Participant 12**

“Carol Off was inspiring and she taught me so much I'd forgotten or didn't know about our country's artistic journey. LOVED it! … Excellent conference! Blending the international delegates with local was appreciated and was super well done…Well done the whole team!.” **– Survey Participant 14**

"Being able to interact with delegates from around the world was what really struck me. I thought it would be mainly Canadian based agents but this had a very international feel to it. I also loved the showcases and pitches. They gave me so many creative ideas for my own work and how to promote it." **- Survey Participant 8**

"I very much enjoyed the Thursday morning sessions on various topics - I would have participated in all of them. I loved seeing the showcases and pitches - this being a side of things I don't usually get to see. I was happy to see so many of my colleagues from Canadian Heritage and so many funding recipients as well. The level of organization was excellent and I felt that time was wisely used." **- Survey Participant 29**

Keynote Speaker & Artist Voice Presentations



Carol Off: Keynote Speaker (Left) and Crazy Smooth: Artist Voice (Right)

The Conference opened with a speech by Carol Off, a multi-award-winning journalist, author and broadcaster.

The known co-host of CBC Radio's flagship current affairs program, As It Happens, continued her legacy of amusing and enlightening delegates with her unique style of feisty, witty and compassionate interviews.Her presentation was a noted highlight amongst attendees, setting the stage for exploring the relevance of arts and Canada's impact connecting with the world and one one another.

On Wednesday, delegates were then treated to an Artist Voice session, featuring B-boy Crazy Smooth in conversation with Banff Centre's Chris Lorway. The session offered a thoughtful and revealing meander through Smooth's foray into the traditional performing arts milieu. As a self taught street dancer, his path into the theatre world required a whole new lexicon and focus on relationship building. Crazy Smooth explored the artist' journey in making art that is relevant.!
National Arts Centre (NAC) Award for Distinguished Contribution to Touring!
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NAC Award for Distinguished Contribution to Touring



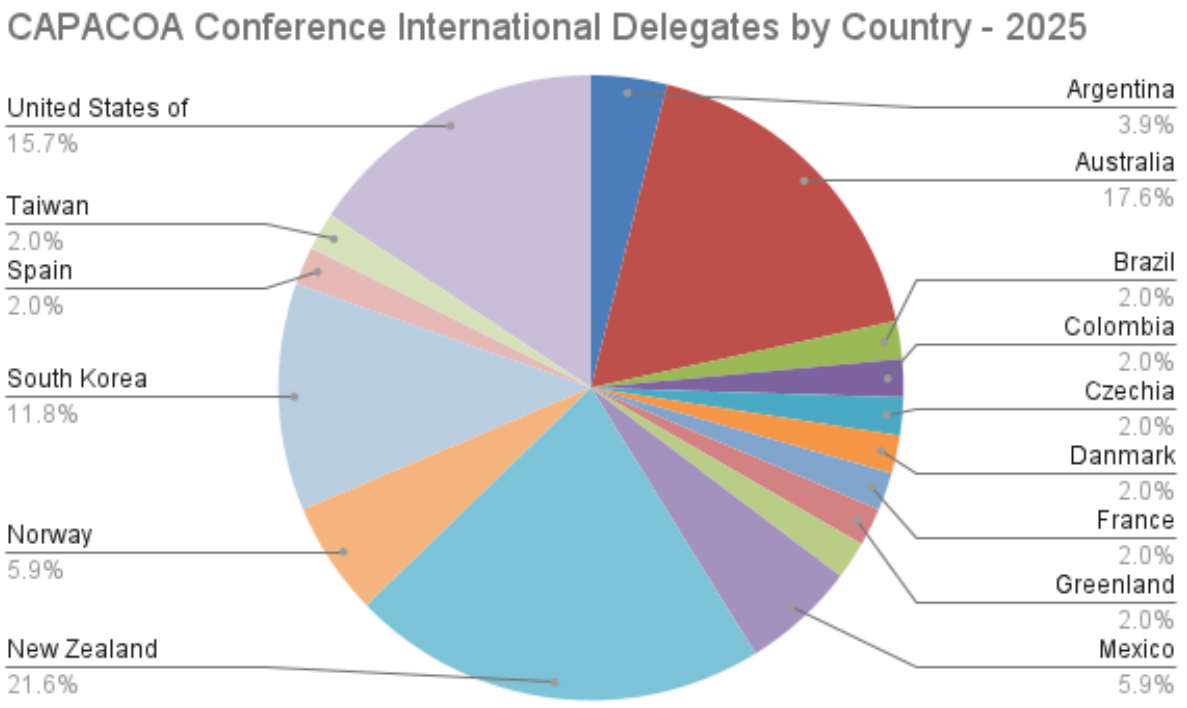
Christopher Deacon (left) and Menno Plukker (right) at the presentation of the NAC Award for Distinguished Contribution to Touring during the 2025 CAPACOA Conference.

CAPACOA was delighted to once again collaborate and hold space to announce this year's recipient of the National Arts Centre (NAC) Award for Distinguished Contribution to Touring - Menno Plukker!

Menno Plukker has spent decades championing Canadian theatre and dance artists on worldwide stages. He began his career leading culturally diverse theatre initiatives and founded his own booking agency in the Netherlands, before expanding his work to represent and produce artists and companies from Québec and Canada across Europe. Since moving to Montréal in 1990, Menno has produced major festivals such as Six Stages in Toronto and Europe, and consulted for internationally renowned events including the London International Festival of Theatre.

2025 Delegate Demographics

Delegate categories*	2025 - CAPACOA Conference	2023 - CAPACOA Conference	2021 - CAPACOA Conference (ONLINE)	2019 - CAPACOA Conference	2018 – CAPACOA @ CINARS	2017 – CAPACOA Conference	2016 – CAPACOA @ CINARS
Agent, manager, producer	27	29	42	44	26	44	29
Artist	115	98	78	36	7	56	20
Arts service organization	30	11	49	21	11	15	13
Funders (new category)	15	14	25	21	7	15	7
Other (suppliers, ticketing, independants, etc)	8	8	4	21	19	16	11
Presenter	66	60	126	55	43	56	47
Presenting network	8	18	20	15	20	17	10
International Delegates	51	35	134	15	4	5	11
Total	**320**	**273**	**478**	**228**	**137**	**224**	**148**



Knowledge Cafe (The Canada-Wide Roaming Edition)



Tim Yerxa (Fredericton Playhouse) hosts a Board Governance discussion during the Knowledge Cafe roundtable sessions at Atlantic Presenters: Convergence, 2025.

CAPACOA collaborated with Atlantic Presenters Association in October 2025 to host Knowledge Cafe sessions at their regional gathering in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. Conversations at each event focused on regionally important challenges and priorities, and were supported by impassioned colleagues from each network's respective community. Participants were able to attend their choice of 2 sessions during each rotation including:

- "Board Governance 101- Who Is Working for Whom Here?" Hosted by Tim Yerxa: Executive Director of the Fredericton Playhouse
- "AI and Performing Arts Presenting Organizations: Are We Friends or Foes?" Hosted by Sarah Garton Stanley: Cultural Strategist, Creative Leader
- "What's the Worst That Could Happen- Understanding Risk Assessment" Hosted by Spencer Shewen: Artistic Director of the Mariposa Folk Festival

International Market Development

Cultural Delegations



The Canada-Korea cohort at the Performing Arts Market Seoul (PAMS) as part of the Canada-Korea Year of Cultural Exchanges (Photo credit: Michael Caldwell, Artistic Director at SummerWorks).

CAPACOA coordinated 5 cultural missions. The delegations included 35 participants representing the multi-disciplinary breadth of work from all provinces and territories across Canada; from equity-seeking organizations exploring diversity and inclusion.

Number of cultural delegations	5
Number of countries	5
Number of presenters	23
Number of artists	12
Total delegates	35

“We often focus so much on building connections and relationships with new artists and international presenters when we travel, but this trip reminded me how important the relationships with our travelling colleagues are. I left Norway with incredible connections to Norwegian artists and presenters, renewed energy from seeing other colleagues from Denmark and Germany, and a brand new “supergroup” of Canadian presenter and artist friends. The six of us (and our intrepid guide Judy!) truly bonded through inspiring and challenging conversations about our work, our sector, and our audiences, as well as what we were experiencing together in Norway and at Festspillene.

– Sean Guist, Artistic Director, Intrepid Theatre

Harstad, Norway
June 22-27, 2025
Following online collaboration, participants participated in a delegation to the Arctic Arts Festival (*Festspillene i Nord-Norge*) in **Harstad, Norway**. The festival serves as a critical networking hub to pitch touring productions, share works in progress, and bridge geographical boundaries across the global North.

Participants:

Heather Redfem	Executive Director, **The Cultch**
Sean Guist	Artistic Director, **Intrepid**
Pam Patel	Artistic Director, **MT Space**
Margaret Grenier	**Artist**
Laurence Lemieux	**Artist**
Patrick Blenkarn	**Artist**



Post-conference debrief on the last night in Harstad. Pictured: Judy Harquail, Patrick Blenkarn, Sean Guist, Heather Redfern, and Laurence Lemieux.

Edinburgh, Scotland
August 17-24, 2025
Supported by Canadian Heritage (Canada Arts Presentation Fund)
The **Edinburgh Festival Fringe** is the world's largest arts festival happening throughout the month of August and has featured more than 55,000 performances of over 3,000 different shows in approximately 300 venues.

Participants:

Katharine Carol	Artistic & Executive Director, **Vancouver International Children's Festival Society**
Lauren Thomas	Entertainment & Events Coordinator, **Esplanade Arts & Heritage Centre**
Yolaine Robichaud	Director of Operations, **Théâtre Capitol Theatre**
Galen Olstead	Executive Director, **Key City Theatre**
Darcy Campbell	Programming Manager, **Confederation Centre of the Arts**
Jean Louis Bleau	Executive Director, **Chilliwack Cultural Centre**

Seoul, Korea
October 13 -18, 2025
Performing Arts Market in Seoul (PAMS) has been held in Seoul every October as a key Asian arts market for performing arts professionals domestically and internationally. As the largest international performing arts platform in Asia, PAMS celebrates its 21st anniversary this year.

Participants:

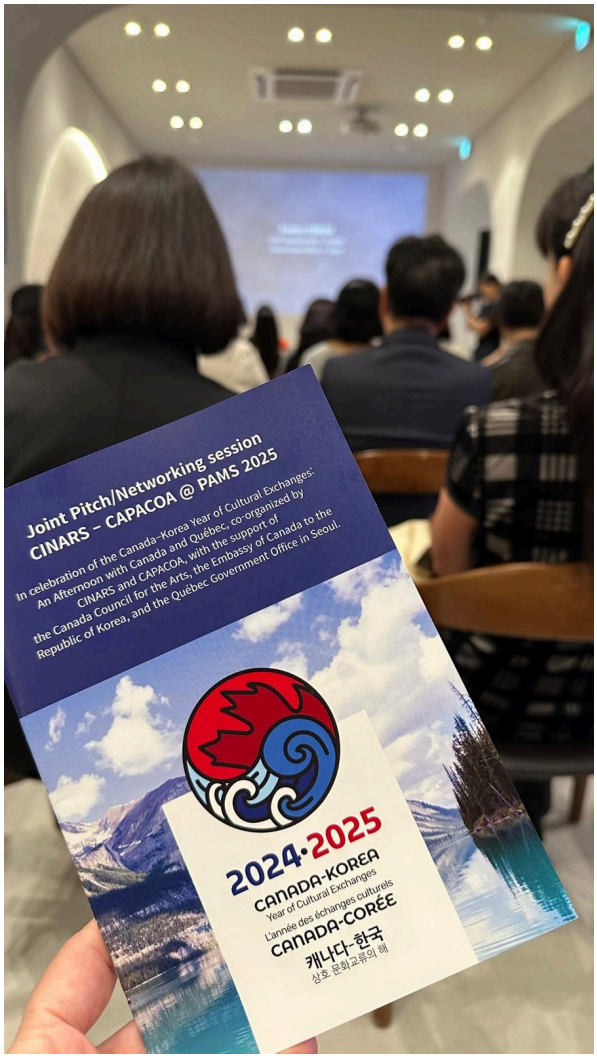
Natalie Lue	Director, **Vancouver Civic Theatres**
Nicole McLuckie	Associate Executive Director, **Vancouver East Cultural Centre (The Cultch)**

Michael Caldwell	Artistic Director, **Summerworks**
Nicole Mion	Artistic Director, **Springboard Performance**
Aislinn Rose	Artistic Director, **The Theatre Centre**
Gabrielle Martin	Artistic Director, **PuSh Festival**
Maiko Yamamoto	Artistic Director, **Theatre Replacement**
Sherry Yoon	Artistic Director, **Boca Del Lupo**
Debi Wong	Artist, **re:Naissance Opera**

Taiwan

October 17 -26, 2025

A Taiwan-focused networking and exchange week held from October 17 to 26, 2025, in partnership with the National Theatre and Concert Hall in Taipei, Huashan 1914 Creative Park, and the Canadian Trade Office in Taiwan.



Participants:

Natalie Lue	Director, **Vancouver Civic Theatres**
Nicole McLuckie	Associate Executive Director, **Vancouver East Cultural Centre (The Cultch)**
Michael Caldwell	Artistic Director, **Summerworks**
Nicole Mion	Artistic Director, **Springboard Performance**
Aislinn Rose	Artistic Director, **The Theatre Centre**
Gabrielle Martin	Artistic Director, **PuSh Festival**
Maiko Yamamoto	Artistic Director, **Theatre Replacement**
Sherry Yoon	Artistic Director, **Boca Del Lupo**
Debi Wong	Artist, **re:Naissance Opera**

Cali, Columbia

November 9 - 17, 2025

The *Bienal Internacional de Danza de Cali*, a project led by the *Asociación para la Promoción de las Artes (Proartes)*, promotes dialogue between the various genres, generations and experiences of dance in Colombia. Since its creation in 2013, the Cali International Dance Biennial has managed to bring together more than 4,250 dancers from different parts of the world who have participated in 255 activities and presentations across Cali in programs that have gathered more than 224,000 attendees.

Participants:

Caroline Ohrt	Executive Producer, Dance, **National Arts Centre**
Jim Smith	Artistic & Executive Director, **DanceHouse**
Alexandra “Spicey” Landé	**Artist**
Alyssa Martin	**Artist**
Laurence Lemieux	**Artist**

A special thank you to Judy Harquail and Gillian Reid (Chair), and members of the International Market Development committee for their stewardship of these market development activities.





Member Programs

Presenters Capacity Building Program

The twelfth edition of this program was delivered with Canadian Heritage (CAPF) funds by both RIDEAU and CAPACOA to presenting members in 2025-2026.

Following a rigorous two day peer assessment, the program delivered $140,000 in capacity building funds presenting organizations under three components: organizational consultation, mentoring, and professional development.

37 applications were received for this program. 16 recipients were selected.

The 12 CAPACOA Member recipients included:

- Festival Quartiers Danses (FQD)
- Harbourfront Theatre
- Lawrence O'Brien Arts Centre
- Manitoba Arts Network
- Ottawa Fringe
- Public Energy Performing Arts
- PuSh Festival
- Réseau SPARC Network
- Small World Music
- Théâtre Capitol Theatre
- Under the Spire
- Vancouver International Children's Festival

"This project was important to Ottawa Fringe because it allowed the organization to build meaningful long-term capacity around accessibility and audio description at a time when opportunities for blind and low-vision audiences to access live theatre in Ottawa remain limited. The project helped formalize internal practices, strengthen relationships with the disabled community, and deepen the organization's understanding of how accessibility can be authentically integrated into an independent, artist-driven festival environment.

Within the broader field, the project contributes to ongoing conversations about how festivals and smaller arts organizations can sustainably incorporate accessibility into their programming and audience development practices, while demonstrating that accessible performance experiences can exist within non-traditional and experimental theatre spaces."

– Alain Richer, Executive & Artistic Director
Ottawa Fringe
2025-2026 recipient

National Network Meeting

Following the gathering at the Lord Elgin in Ottawa, March 11 - 12, 2025, the network associations have arranged to meet quarterly in online spaces, to allow year-round continued discussions about tools, network outreach opportunities, and cross-regional support. Both network members and non-member networks across Canada are welcome at these calls. CAPACOA also continues to work as a collaborator within the Regional Presenters Network Community, supporting the design and maintenance of national tools aiding collaboration and block-booking efforts across Canada and abroad.

In-person space was held at the CAPACOA Conference 2025, for regional network meetings to occur, alongside other cohort discussions. The community chose to delay the official in-person spring gathering until June 2026, to support greater participation.



Metcalf Fellow David Maggs launched day 2 of the 2025 National Network Meeting with a provoking presentation on *Four Surprises of Decline*.

Professional Development Webinars

CAPACOA hosted 13 webinars and other online gatherings. With the exception of the advocacy town hall, all other events were held as part of another project or program. Aggregated attendance statistics are analyzed below.

Date	Event name	Type of event	Program/project	Total participants
2025-04-30	Arts Pulse Series: Presenter Learning Priorities	Knowledge sharing	ArtPulse	21
2025-04-30	Arts Pulse Series: Agent/Manager Learning Priorities	Knowledge sharing	ArtPulse	12
2025-05-02	Arts Pulse Series: Artist Learning Priorities	Knowledge sharing	ArtPulse	12
2025-06-19	Artsdata Lunch and Learn	Knowledge sharing	Data literacy	15
2025-07-15	Fighting Resale and Ticket Fraud: Strategies for the Live Performance Sector	Town hall	All Access Town Halls	58
2025-10-01	Re-Imagining Customer Relationships: Project Update Webinar	Webinar	Reimagining Customer Relationships	52
2025-10-15	Structured data: A powerhouse for event discoverability	Presentation	Data literacy	5
2025-11-19	Artsdata Lunch and Learn	Knowledge sharing	Data literacy	10
2025-11-24	Intro to Digital Discoverability for Events	Prof. dev. (other)	Data literacy	3
2025-11-25	Intro to Digital Discoverability for Events	Prof. dev. (other)	Data literacy	4
2025-11-26	Intro to Digital Discoverability for Events	Prof. dev. (other)	Data literacy	9
2026-01-20	Building Belonging Through Arts and Culture: Welcoming New Canadians Through Canoo	Webinar	Reimagining Customer Relationships	34
2026-02-24	Ticket Resale: Policy, Pricing and Protection	Webinar	All Access Town Halls	57

Projects

Indigenous Directory Development

This project continues in partnership with Ontario Presents(OP) and Full Circle: First Nation Performance. CAPACOA has been funded by CCA to lead this collaborative Indigenous Directory initiative.

- By creating a directory of Indigenous presenters, the project aims to strengthen and build the touring network of Indigenous arts
- The directory will also identify non-Indigenous presenters with a historic commitment to presenting and programming Indigenous arts,and Indigenous presenters in communities across northern Turtle Island.
- The intent is to foster collaborations, expand knowledge of established and existing programming, and build meaningful relations and connections for touring Indigenous artists within institutions and neighboring Indigenous communities.

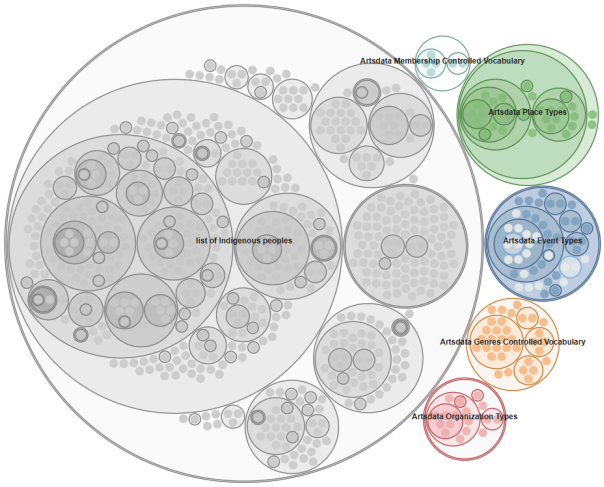
Indigenous Touring Network Development

- The ongoing project, referred to as the Indigenous Touring Network study, is a collaborative initiative between CAPACOA and Full Circle: First Nations Performance, supported by the Canada Council for the Arts. Its primary goal is to enhance the touring experience for Indigenous artists by fostering deeper, more meaningful, and culturally sensitive relationships within the performing arts community.
- The project began with the idea of creating a directory of Indigenous and non-Indigenous presenters and artists across Canada. However, the team quickly recognized that a simple directory would be insufficient, as previous attempts faced issues with maintenance and becoming outdated. The focus has shifted from merely listing contacts to cultivating relationships and building an Indigenous-led network grounded in Indigenous protocols and ways of working. Touring is reframed not as the movement of "products," but as the movement of people, culture, and stories. Ultimately, the vision is to connect with existing networks in Australia and Aotearoa (New Zealand) to form a Tri-Nations Indigenous touring network, potentially expanding to other Indigenous nations globally.
- The project is designed to be responsive and organic, constantly adapting based on conversations with various stakeholders.
- This incredible work is being led by Denise Bolduc and Nathan Mudge.

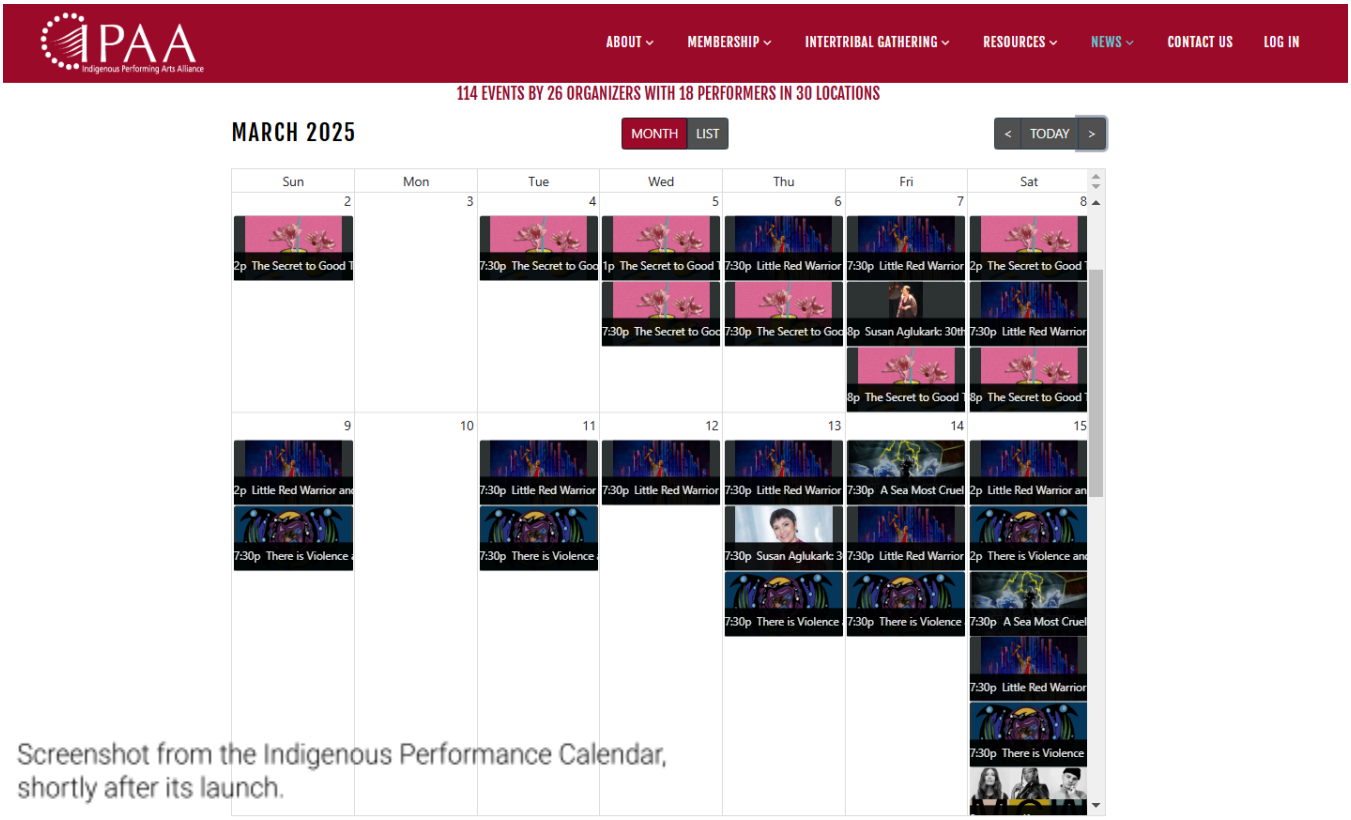
Indigenous Performance Calendar of Events featuring Indigenous Artists

This project has been developed since 2024 as a part of Artsdata's work to improve the visibility and discoverability of Indigenous artists online. This calendar takes a new and unique approach: it retrieves and aggregates all events in Artsdata where the performer is self-identified as an Indigenous artist, group or company. The calendar was launched on the [Indigenous Performing Arts Alliance's website] in March 2025.

- In 2025-2026, the calendar was also added to the [Lodge Pole Alliance's website], using a new widget feature from the Footlight app.
- We streamlined the technology behind the calendar. We notably enhanced the calendar's code to also retrieve events presented by Indigenous organizations. We also imported all Indigenous people from Wikidata to run faster, more reliable queries directly in Artsdata. Indigenous peoples are now part of Artsdata's vocabularies.



A visualization of [Artsdata's controlled vocabularies], including Indigenous Peoples.



Screenshot from the Indigenous Performance Calendar, shortly after its launch.

Classical & Heritage Arts Initiative (CHAI), Networking Support



- Volunteer network leader Nina Buddhdev, from The BANDISH Network, was funded to lead dialogues with current and potential members of this Heritage Arts Network Community.
    - The BANDISH network's objectives are "to influence, connect, inspire, forge collective working relations, develop new dialogue and redefine ideas for the advancement of Asian heritage artists, promoters, presenters, venues, and producers interested in genre-specific engagement.
    - The network focuses on artist needs and aims to 'connect, empower and create', to develop a fuller understanding of the Indian Classical arts movement in Canada.
    - Members are from provincial, national and international influence who all play a vital role in the impact of global heritage arts.
- In an effort to encourage a greater understanding of national and provincial offerings, while encouraging the implementation of new artist supports and presenter practices that could be adopted to assist the presenting of these artforms, CAPACOA has funded network meeting opportunities, and are in the process of initiating a project proposal to launching a regular knowledge sharing series. 12 online gatherings took place between February and October 2025. These activities brought together 57 unique participants and 75 total participants (excluding Nina).
- Recordings from past sessions, and updates about ongoing meeting opportunities with CHAI are listed online.

Re-imagining Customer Relationships (RCR) Project

(aka Loyalty and Affiliation Project)

Context: A collaborative initiative to design, test, and evaluate strategies to deepen loyalty among regular arts goers and develop affiliation among occasional arts goers. Project partners and collaborators include CAPACOA, Orchestras Canada, PACT, the National Arts Centre, HEC Montréal, The Association for Opera in Canada, WolfBrown, and Prairie Research Associates. This project is funded by the Government of Canada, Mitacs, the Azrieli Foundation, the Metcalf Foundation, and the Chawkers Foundation. The project started in September 2024.



RCR Session at the CAPACOA Conference. Pictured: Marie-Eve Chaput, Julia Felgner, Élodie Santos, Julie Fossitt, and Renaud Legoux.

***Supporting Initiators* Field Study:**

Context: The *Supporting Initiators* field study examines the role of initiators (individuals who organize outings to cultural events for their friends and family) through qualitative interviews and experiments.

- This field study was organized into two phases: the research phase and the experiment phase. The research phase took place entirely during this fiscal year, while the experiment phase began toward the end of the fiscal year.
- The research phase consisted of two rounds of interviews. The first round involved performing arts organizations and explored how cultural organizations identify and engage initiators. The second round

involved interviews with initiators themselves, providing insight into their motivations and objectives as organizers of cultural outings.
- Findings from the interviews were used to develop a handbook containing recommendations for improving the engagement and involvement of initiators in purchasing and coordination processes.
- During the experiment phase, participating organizations had the opportunity to test the recommendations from the handbook in practice and took part in monthly cohort meetings to share their experiences and learn from one another.
- At the end of the experiment phase, participating organizations submitted reports documenting their experience conducting the research and implementing the recommendations, as well as their observations and insights on the effectiveness of the approaches they tested.

***Survey on Affiliation and Membership in the Performing Arts*:**

Context: This pan-Canadian survey explored arts-goers' current forms and levels of affiliation with performing arts organizations, as well as their attitudes toward different membership offerings.

- In February 2026, CAPACOA launched a nationwide, multi-level survey consisting of two components: an organizational survey focused on organizations' characteristics and membership offerings, and a patron survey exploring loyalty behaviours and attitudes toward different membership models.
- The patron survey was distributed to participating organizations to share with their patrons.
- In total, 70 organizations participated in the survey along with 5,669 arts patrons, making it one of the largest audience surveys ever conducted in Canada.
- Organizations that received a minimum of 30 patron responses were provided with a customized report featuring benchmarking data. A total of 42 organizations met this threshold.
- The survey is scheduled to wrap up in the next fiscal year, with reports and corresponding webinars to be released as part of the final phase.
- The survey was jointly designed by the project partners and HEC Montréal, with input from WolfBrown and Prairie Research Associates.

***Trialing Membership Offers* Field Study:**

Context: This field study investigates how membership programs can foster loyalty and affiliation through qualitative interviews, quantitative survey findings, and experiments.

- This field study was organized into two phases: a research phase and an experiment phase. The research phase began during this fiscal year, while the experiment phase is scheduled to take place in the next fiscal year.
- The research phase consisted of both qualitative and quantitative components. The qualitative component involved interviews with performing arts organizations that have previously implemented or are currently running membership programs. These interviews explored the successes and challenges of different membership models, the balance between transactional and relational approaches, how these programs create value for members, and their effectiveness in fostering loyalty.
- The quantitative component drew on the membership-related findings from the *Survey on Affiliation and Membership in the Performing Arts*.
- In the next fiscal year, these findings will inform the development of a handbook that will lay the groundwork for the experiment phase. During this phase, a call for applications will invite performing arts organizations to pilot innovative membership models based on the recommendations and insights gathered through the research.

Loyalty Labs:

Context: Loyalty Labs is a facilitated online learning community designed to help arts organizations in Canada and the U.S. strengthen customer loyalty through innovative marketing and programming strategies.

- Loyalty Labs is organized like a social media platform, divided into five groups, or "labs" (Membership & Affiliations, Social Initiators, Taste Communities, Programming Frames, and Presentation Formats), each focused on a distinct approach to audience engagement. Members can post, comment, like, and interact with one another's posts.
- Members of CAPACOA, Orchestras Canada, PACT, and the Association for Opera in Canada were able to access the Loyalty Labs for free, courtesy of the RCR project.
- This gave organizations across Canada that were not selected to participate in the project's field studies an opportunity to engage with the broader themes of the project, helping to maximize participation and broaden the project's reach.
- Organizations participating in the *Supporting Initiators* field study also used the platform to share ideas, ask questions, and learn from one another throughout the study.



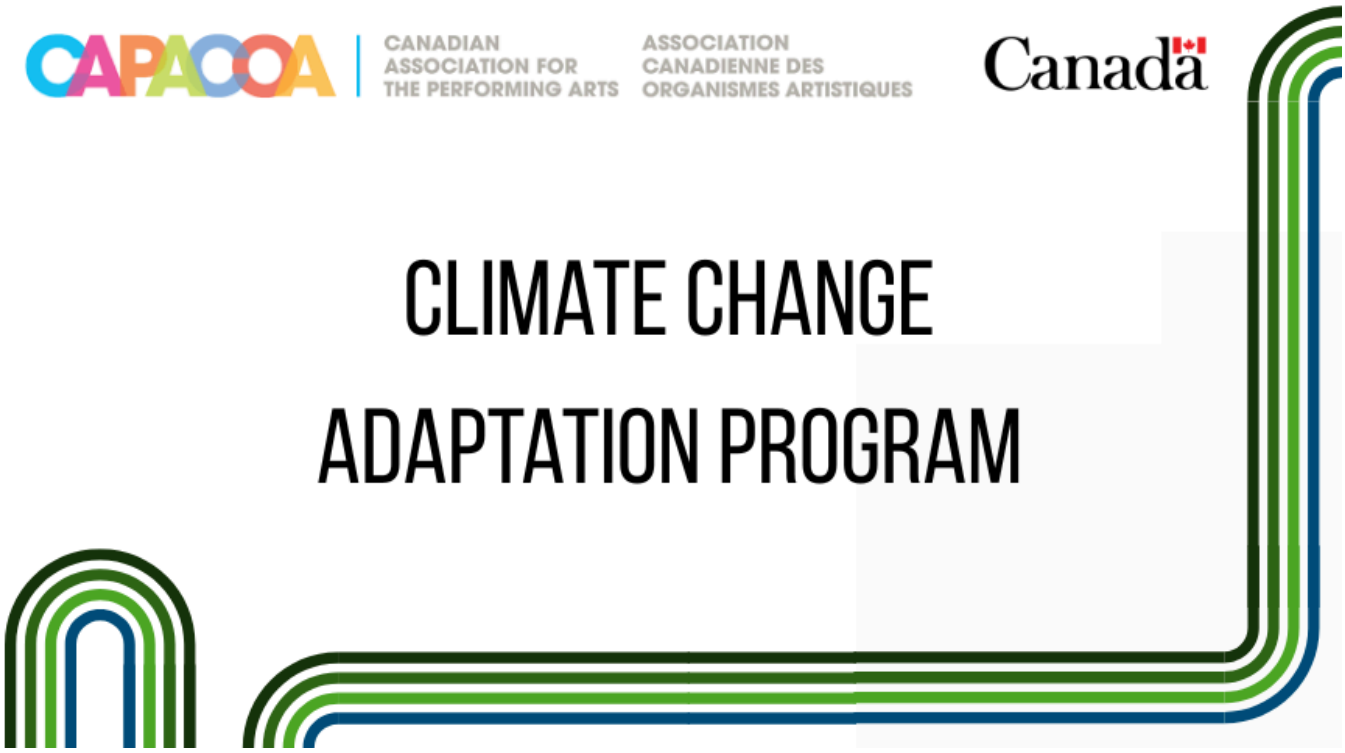
RCR session at the O2 Conference. Pictured: Julia Felgner and Élodie Santos with O2 Conference delegates.

Events:

- October 1, 2025: Re-Imagining Customer Relationships (RCR): Project Update Webinar
    - A webinar held to update the performing arts community on the RCR project as a whole, with a specific focus on the preliminary findings of the *Supporting Initiators* field study.
- November 13, 2025: Loyalty Labs Information Session
    - An information session facilitated by WolfBrown that introduced the Loyalty Labs to CAPACOA's, Orchestras Canada's, PACT's, and The Association for Opera in Canada's membership.

- December 3, 2025: Re-imagining Customer Relationships at the CAPACOA Conference
    - An information session where two participants of the *Supporting Initiators* field study were invited to talk about their experience with initiators, and an update of the RCR project was provided.
- December 4, 2025: Knowledge Café - Rethinking Membership Models
    - A facilitated roundtable discussion at the CAPACOA conference themed around the *Trialing Membership Offers* field study.
- December 4, 2025: Knowledge Café - Engaging Social Initiators
    - A facilitated roundtable discussion at the CAPACOA conference themed around the *Supporting Initiators* field study.
- January 20, 2026: Building Belonging Through Arts and Culture: Welcoming New Canadians Through Canoo
    - An information session facilitated by Canoo about their services to help performing arts organizations diversify their audiences and develop lasting relationships with new Canadians in their community.
- February 5, 2026: RCR Session at the O2 Conference
    - An information session about the RCR project, its field studies, and findings from the *Supporting Initiators* field study.

Climate Change Adaptation Program



In November 2025, CAPACOA and the Centre for Sustainable Practice in the Arts (CSPA) launched the Climate Change Adaptation Program (CCAP). This program seeks to research, develop, and help prepare the national performing arts sector to adapt to the impacts of climate change. This project is supported by funding from Canadian Heritage.

The program initiated its first stage, creating an environmental scan to map out the effects of climate change and the specific vulnerabilities of each bioregion. This included an assessment of the work that has been done already and identified the gaps in information that still needed to be filled.

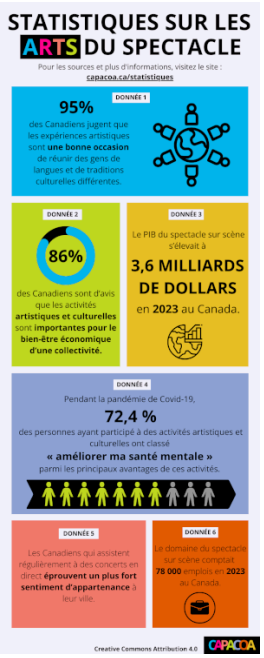
To gather feedback on how climate change is impacting various organizations, we conducted the following activities:

- At the 2025 CAPACOA Conference in Ottawa, CAPACOA hosted a climate luncheon. Leaders from art service organizations and international delegates met to learn about the new Climate Change Adaptation Program and share their regional experiences with the group.
- The CCAP team hosted a knowledge cafe table at the CAPACOA Conference.
- CAPACOA hosted a climate focused Town Hall in February 2026, to inform our members about the new Climate Change Adaptation Program. We gathered feedback from a diverse group of 27 presenting organizations that included music, dance, circus and children's festival programmers, as well as regional venues.

- The CCAP team conducted 21 one on one virtual interviews with festival organizers and leaders in the field. These conversations enabled us to gather contextualized and comprehensive real world accounts of how organizations are being affected by climate change.
- We attended Pacific Contact, the Indigenous Performing Arts Alliance's Intertribal Gathering, and the BC Music Festivals Collective's meeting at the Ignite the Arts Festival to meet with members and learn about regional impacts of climate change.
- We hosted two virtual cohort meetings with national and international leaders in the field of performing arts and climate change to share knowledge and learn about best practices from across the country and the globe.

Research

- CAPACOA fully reviewed and updated the regular Performing Arts Statistics page, adding 2024 and 2025 data from Statistics Canada as they became available. This page contains selected research snippets and continues to draw several visitors to the CAPACOA website.
- CAPACOA sponsored a special edition of *Statistical Insights on the Arts* dedicated to the Economic performance of performing arts products in 2024. Thanks to the sponsorship, the full article is available for non-subscribers.
- CAPACOA also continued to participate in the Culture Statistics Strategy Consortium. CAPACOA joined the CSSC in 2020 to support the development of new statistical programs as part of the Culture Satellite Account (such as the National Culture Indicators). Being a member of the CSSC also provides access to detailed Statistics Canada tables and enables CAPACOA to build bridges between the world of statistical data and that of linked open data.
- As part of the Re-Imagining Customer Relationships project, CAPACOA managed the *Survey on Affiliation and Membership in the Performing Arts* and contributed to the design of the methodology and the survey questionnaires (see above).



CAPACOA's intern, Victoria Del Mastro, designed infographics highlighting a few key performing arts statistics.

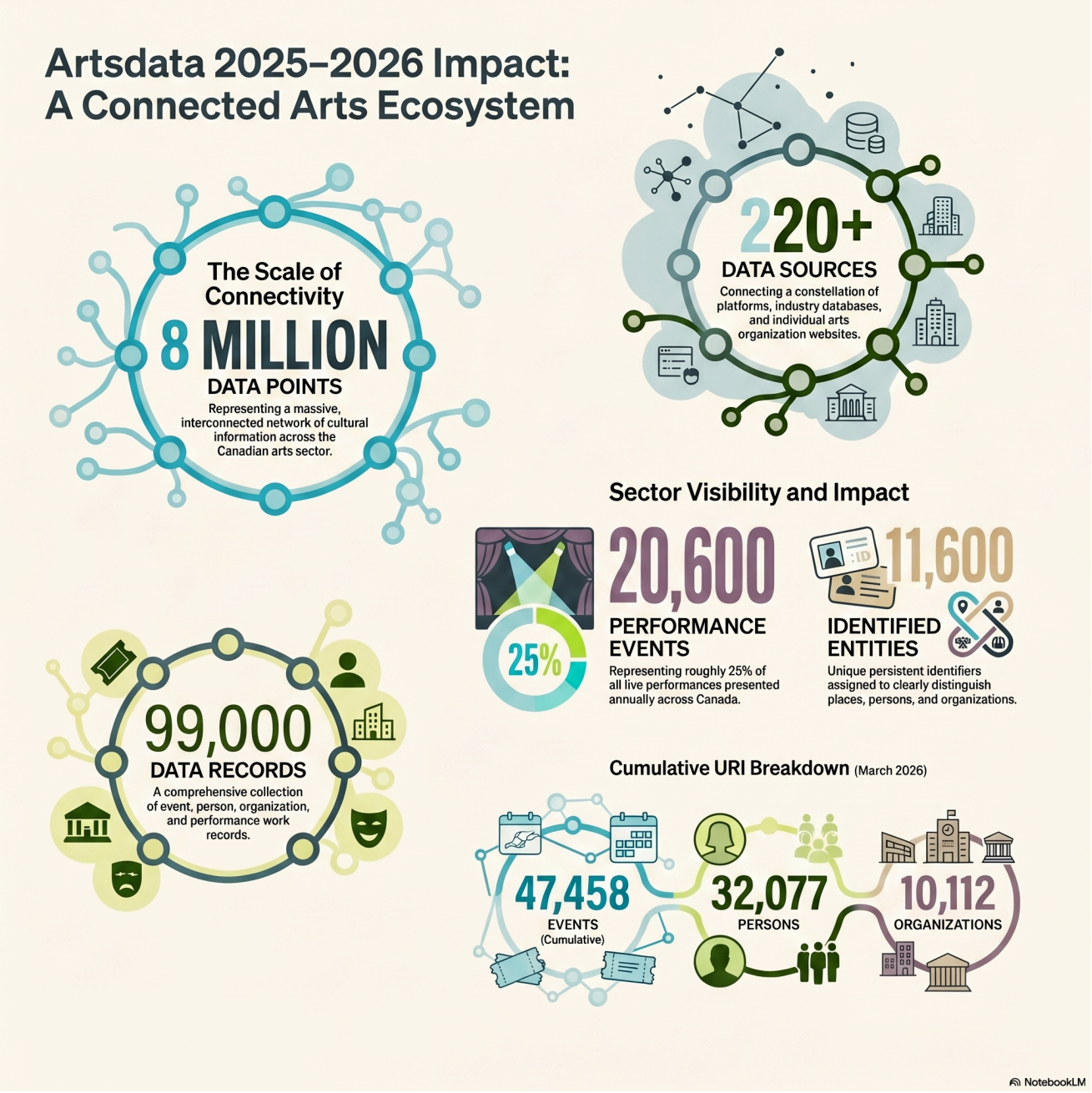
Artsdata Project

This project is managed by CAPACOA on behalf of the Artsdata Community Group, a community of users that serves as a governing body for the project. The project was funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage (Year 3 of a 3-year Canada Cultural Investment Fund contribution) and the Canada Council for the Arts (Year 2 of a 3-year Grow Grant).

Here are some highlights from the Artsdata project for the 2025-2026 year:

- We continued integration activities with the Arts Touring Connector and I Want to Showcase. With the help of a new batch reconciliation tool, we assigned Artsdata IDs to more than 2,000 place, organization, and artist records. This contributed to a 76% increase in the number of entities with an Artsdata ID.
- We integrated 82 new data sources into the knowledge graph, bringing the total number of data feeds to 223 (see all sources). With this growing number of sources, we loaded more than 20,000 events with a start date between April 2025 and March 2026. This represents 25% of all estimated live performances presented annually in Canada.
- We implemented a new Update Core Data workflow that automatically combines different data records about the same event into a unified, comprehensive and authoritative record. This workflow is notably used to combine data records from crawled websites, with matching records from the Arts Touring Connector or from Spektrix (example).
- We published a research report that demonstrated a positive association between the presence of event structured data and digital discoverability. Rich event structured data was associated with increases in organic traffic of up to 50% compared to events without structured data.
- We published a research report on sustainable pathways for cultural knowledge graphs. Following this report, we developed consulting services in data modelling and systems interoperability.
- Artsdata continued the Digital Discoverability Program, welcoming 19 participants to the 2025-2026 cohort. By the end of the program, 8 new event data feeds were loaded to Artsdata, including two that clearly identified performers.
- We sent four editions of the Artsdata newsletter.
- Our community-building and data-literacy activities, along with other programs and services, reached 341 unique participants (557 total participants).

A full Artsdata annual report can be found on the Artsdata website.



"The World Expo is an opportunity to share our Canadian culture and ingenuity. We didn't want to build yet another isolated content platform, so we decided to build on top of existing infrastructure: Canada's cultural knowledge graph, Artsdata. By using Artsdata, we weren't just showcasing Canada's culture on stage; we are strengthening Canada's cultural sovereignty. This approach ensured our artists were discoverable on their own terms, reducing our reliance on foreign tech intermediaries while making the entire national ecosystem more efficient and connected."

– Jason Westerlund, Director, Digital Experiences + Design, National Arts Centre

[Read the user story about Artsdata at World Expo Osaka]

"I was really excited to work with Dessa, Morgan, and the Artsdata team to improve our search engine results. When we signed up, we didn't know what to expect. We just knew we needed to take advantage of this opportunity and commit to finding better solutions. We met with the Artsdata team every few weeks and worked towards our goals. We created a strategy specific to our needs and eventually brought in our web developer to attend some final meetings. The results were impressive, and it was certainly a team effort! We're very grateful for the experience and highly recommend the Digital Discoverability program. It can be overwhelming to find the time to get started, but the Artsdata team is so knowledgeable and supportive."

– Andrea Noble, Marketing and Outreach Manager, Port Theatre
Read the user story



Morgan Pannunzio and Dessa Hayes, co-presented an Artsdata session at the Canadian Arts, Marketing, Ticketing and Development Conference, in June 2025.

Policy Development and Advocacy

Federal Government Advocacy

CAPACOA had two major advocacy accomplishments in 2025-2026:

1. Supplementary funding for Canadian Arts Presenting Fund (CAPF) and Building Communities through Arts and Heritage (BCAH) was extended in the 2025 budget.
2. The Creative Export Strategy was extended. The Government of Canada announced an investment of $95 million to the Strategy over five years, as well as $19 million annually afterward.

Meanwhile, the Strategic Innovation component of the Canada Cultural Investment Fund was terminated further to the government's Comprehensive Expenditure Review. This program component has funded the Linked Digital Future initiative and then the Artsdata project since 2018. The disappearance of this program component represents a challenge for Artsdata's sustainability.

Visitor Visa Guidelines & Assistance Service



Context: Since August 2024, CAPACOA administers the Visitor Visa Assistance Program, providing guidance and one-on-one assistance as needed. Through the program, performing arts organizations can register their events with the Special Events Unit, even if they don't meet all eligibility criteria.

The section on "Visitor Visa Guidelines for Performing Arts Organizations and Visiting Artists" on the CAPACOA website is a true goldmine of information. It includes everything from ready-to-use documents that make our work easier to important reminders about key points to share with international companies. I also have to mention that their customer service is exceptional. Overall, I would give them an appreciation rating of "20 out of 10"!

– Sophie Anka; Company Manager, Dance; National Arts Centre

Advocacy Committee

CAPACOA would like to express our deepest gratitude to members of the advocacy committee. These wonderful members and allies met 4 times in 2024-2025 to provide guidance and on-the-ground intelligence to the CAPACOA team:

- Erin Benjamin
- Jacinthe Comeau
- Gisèle Côté
- Julie Haddow
- Kennedy Jenson
- Nicole McLuckie
- Anele Mhlahlo
- Julie-Anne Richard
- Nicole Rochefort
- Martin Roy
- Ann-Marie Williams
- Tim Yerxa

Communications

All Access / Libre Accès (Newsletter)

- 12 issues were sent between April 2025 - March 2026
- 8 additional *Special Bulletins* were sent between April 2025 - March 2026
- 2,638 subscribers as of March 2026, a very **slight increase** from 2,616 from March 2025
- The communications team started tracking email readership with bot-filtered results. Average readership (open rates) was 28.0% in 2025-2026
    - Previous years only tracked non-bot filtered readership rates. For comparison, average non-filtered readership (open rates) was 45.9% in 2025-2026, a very **slight increase** from 45.7% in 2024-25 and 44.9% 2023-24 and from 35.6% 2022-23
- Average click rate was 8.1% in 2025-2026, an **increase** from 7.4% in 2024-25

Website

In 2025–26, there were 31,418 page clicks on the capacoa.ca domain and 3,040 on the capacoaconference.ca domain. This represents a near a **very slight 0.8% decrease** in the number of page clicks on the capacoa.ca domain from 2024-2025 (31,672 clicks), and a 25% increase in the number of page clicks on the capacoaconference.ca domain from the 2,432 clicks recorded in 2023–24 (previous conference year).

We published 18 news articles in 2025-26 (compared to 23 in 2024-25). These included:

- Calls for nominations/expressions of interest
- Updates about the CAPACOA conference
- Advocacy-related organizational statements
- Artsdata reports and updates
- Announcement of new programs, tools, and professional development opportunities

More specifically, our news articles titled *Register NOW for the 2025 CAPACOA Conference: Age of Relevance!* and *Live Performance Funding Holds Steady in Budget 2025* were the most viewed with 185 and 159 clicks respectively This is a **modest increase** from last year's most popular articles, which received 165 and 113 clicks.

Overall, our most visited pages were the conference landing page (3,217 clicks), job board (3,071 clicks), board page (1955 clicks), member directory (1,384 clicks), and visitor visa guidelines page (1,251 clicks).

Social Media

As of September 29, 2026 (at the publication of this report), we have:

- 2,846 Facebook page followers, up from 2,700 in September 2025
- 2,203 Instagram followers, up from 1,944 in September 2025

Facebook

- 115 Facebook posts (3% increase from 2024-25)
- 10,366 overall reach (12.4% decrease from 2023-24)

- 3,071 visits (21.1% increase from 2023-24)
- 586 content interactions (14.2% increase from 2023-24)

Instagram

- 100 Instagram posts (7.4% decrease from 2023-24)
- 133 Instagram stories (31.1% decrease from 2023-24)
- 8,116 overall reach (231.3% increase from 2023-24)
- 1,644 visits (15.8% increase from 2023-24)
- 320 content interactions (100% increase from 2023-24)

Overall participation indicators

CAPACOA's team members diligently compiled standardized participation statistics for each event and program led by CAPACOA or with which CAPACOA collaborated. The following table shows key indicators pulled from these disaggregated statistics. CAPACOA staff members are excluded from these counts (even though they are occasionally active participants or learners in some activities led by peer staff members).

Indicator	2024-2025	2025-2026
Unique participants at core CAPACOA events and programs	**292**	**606**
Total participants at core CAPACOA events and programs	**403**	**826**
Unique participants across all core CAPACOA or Artsdata events and programs	**411**	**705**
Total participants across all core CAPACOA or Artsdata events and programs	**608**	**1007**
Total participants across all events and programs, including CAPACOA-led activities at 3rd-party events and collaborative events	**787**	**1280**

Interpretation:

- The count of unique participants – 606 – is an expression of the breadth of CAPACOA's engagement (everyone is counted once, no matter how often they participated).
- The count of total participants – 826 – is an expression of the depth of CAPACOA's engagement (how regularly people engage with our events and programs, including repeat attendance from the same persons).
- Participation at either CAPACOA or Artsdata events or programs are listed in rows 4-5. In 2025-2026, Artsdata was responsible for 181 total participants, in addition to the 826 participants at core CAPACOA activities.
- The last indicator – 1280 – represents CAPACOA's total reach across CAPACOA-led events and programs, Artsdata events and programs, jointly-led events and programs, and sessions presented by CAPACOA at

events produced by others. This includes, as examples, digital literacy sessions delivered by CAPACOA at the Arts Reach conference and the Matinées numériques events.

Participation by program

The following table details participation by program. CAPACOA staff members are excluded from these counts.

Program/project	Unique participants	Total participants
AGM	23	23
All Access Town Halls	115	138
ArtPulse	39	45
CHAI	40	49
Climate Initiative	43	58
Conference	276	299
Data literacy	233	269
Digital Discoverability Program	29	40
International Market Development	25	35
Knowledge Cafe	29	29
Matinées numériques	60	78
One-on-one services	16	21
PCBP	12	12
Reimagining Customer Relationships	131	160
Wikidata/Wikimedia	10	24
Grand Total	**923**	**1280**

Insight

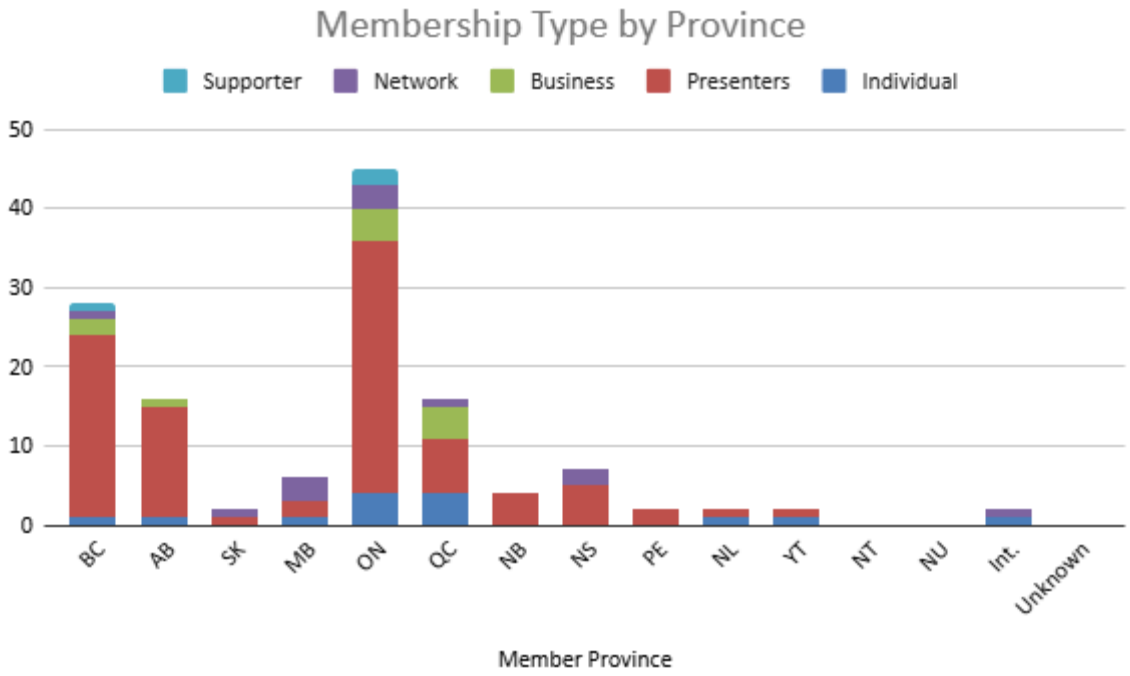
- There isn't a lot of overlap between participants at CAPACOA programs and participants in Artsdata programs. While many CAPACOA member organizations do participate in Artsdata programs, they are usually represented by personnel other than the executive director. This is probably a good thing: Artsdata programs and other programs such as Re-Imagining Customer Relationships make it possible for CAPACOA to connect more deeply with our member organizations.

2 – Operations

Membership

During the 2025-26 year, overall membership remained steady. The highest growths were experienced among business members, as more planned to engage with conference and networking activities.. Economic circumstances remain difficult for all members, notably among agents and managers. Variances in purchased network memberships fluctuated amongst niche networks, though they remained engaged in national efforts throughout.

Member Province	Individual	Presenters	Business	Network	Supporter	Member 25-26
BC	3	35	5	1	1	45
AB	2	13	0	1	0	16
SK	0	1	0	1	0	2
MB	1	3	0	3	0	7
ON	9	35	9	3	2	58
QC	8	10	10	3	0	31
NB	0	4	0	1	0	5
NS	2	5	0	3	0	10
PE	1	4	0	0	0	5
NL	1	2	0	0	0	3
YT	3	1	0	0	0	4
NT	0	0	0	0	0	0
NU	0	0	0	0	0	0
Int.	2	0	0	1	0	3
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0
25-26 Totals	**32**	**113**	**24**	**17**	**3**	189
24-25 Totals	**31**	**114**	**21**	**19**	**3**	188



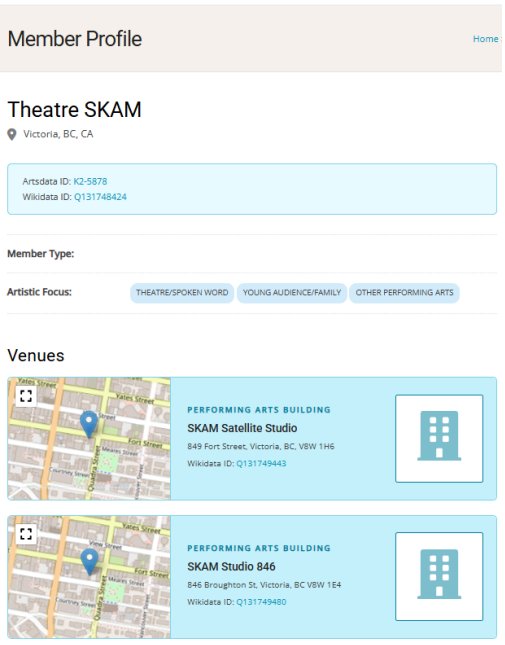
LIVE Performing Arts Directory

Membership renewals were once again managed through the online membership form and in conjunction with the open data strategy.

Even though the use of the membership form provides members many benefits associated with the open data strategy – not the least of which is the display of their information in CAPACOA's LIVE Performing Arts Directory – some members still prefer to renew using traditional methods: they await to be emailed an invoice, which they can pay with one of our easy payment options.

Throughout the year, we continued to upload member information in Wikidata, as an online digital discoverability membership benefit. We manually created Wikidata items describing our members' venues, while also creating profiles for member organizations and artists.

Theatre SKAM joined CAPACOA in January 2025. As an immediate benefit of their membership, the CAPACOA team created Wikidata items describing their venue, as can be seen in their profile.



Human Resources

- Sue Urquhart, Executive Director
- Frédéric Julien, Director of Research and Development
- Chandel Gambles, Memberships and Programs Manager
- Erin Kennedy, Special Projects Manager & Conference Producer
- Julia Felgner, Special Projects Officer and National Communications
- Gary Mandin, Indigenous Librarian
- Dessa Hayes, Digital Transformation Agent / Agente en transformation numérique
- Morgan Pannunzio, Digital Transformation Agent / Agente en transformation numérique

IMPACT ON - Young Canada Works(July - December 2025)

- Victoria Del Mastro
- Sam Bean

CHRC - Student Work Placement Program - Young Canada Works (December 2025 - March 2026)

- Victoria Del Mastro
- Sophiane Bukasa

CAPACOA continues to subcontract several areas of operations including Maggie Clarkin as the Controller, Judy Harquail as the International Market Access Director. Additional contractors are hired as various research consultants, IT support, translation, and graphic design supporters.

Partnerships

CAPACOA is able to most effectively reach its goals through meaningful partnerships and collaborations. In fact, nearly all our programs and services are delivered in partnership with other organizations. The following are examples of associations and organizations with whom CAPACOA partnered in 2025-2026:

Association for Opera in Canada
Association RIDEAU
Atlantic Presenters Association
Bandish Network
CINARS
Culture pour tous
Full Circle: First Nations Performance
Indigenous Performing Arts Alliance
National Arts Centre
Ontario Presents / Arts Touring Connector
Orchestras Canada
OSAC / I Want To Showcase
PACT
RADARTS / scenesfrancophones.ca
Tourism, Culture and Heritage, Gov. of NB / ArtsCultureNB

Appendix A – Board Chair Report

Dear CAPACOA Members,

As this is being written many of our member organizations are beginning their new seasons. We exist in an industry that always focuses on what comes next. Too often we don't take the time to reflect on what has happened to bring us to this place or to learn from our experiences or to celebrate our successes. I hope you take the time to review this annual report to see the ambitious work being done by our members, the CAPACOA team, and within our industry as a whole.

One of the most visible things we do as an organization is the bi-annual conference. Last December we met in Ottawa for "The Age of Relevance". This brought together members, artists, funders, international delegates, and many other people engaged in the performing arts industry for a chilly, entertaining, and productive few days in Ottawa.

In many ways, the conference is a lens to view and help understand the impact of the work done by our many working committees, employees, contractors, and members. Our 2025 conference featured professional development opportunities and updates related to many of the programs that CAPACOA leads. Work highlighting Membership programs, the Linked Digital Future initiative, advocacy, customer relationships, efforts to bring artists, agents, and presenters together and our largest contingent of international delegates representing the success of our International Market Development Initiative were all on display in Ottawa.

But dig deeper. There are so many things being done within CAPACOA to serve our industry that are reported on in this document. Each of them is vital to segments of our community and each will have a lasting impact on the work we do and how we work together.

This work happens through the efforts of a dedicated team of people working as employees, volunteers, and engaged members. It isn't possible without the continued support, trust, and interest of our funders on the federal and provincial level as well as our partners in the regional presenting networks.

I want to express my gratitude to all of our members, Executive Director Sue Urquhart, the staff of CAPACOA and to my fellow Board members. I also must acknowledge our chair of the International Market Development Committee and board vice-chair Gillian Reid who is stepping down from the board after completing her final term but will continue to contribute to the IMDC. Her contributions to CAPACOA and to the Board are endless and an example of volunteering at its finest. It is an honour to be a part of this team.

Respectfully submitted

Glenn Brown

Chair, Board of Directors

Appendix B – Conference Committee Report

Committee Members:
Co-Chairs: Michele Emslie and Angela Campbell
Members: Laurie Gillis, Kennedy Jensen, Natalie Lue, Gillian Reid, Valerie Cusson, Judy Harquail

Staff: Sue Urquhart, Executive Director, Erin Kennedy, Conference Coordinator, Chandel Gambles, Membership and Programs Manager

Note: Erin Kennedy was originally on the committee as a CAPACOA Board Member; however, in early 2025 she stepped off the Board. In February 2025, she was hired by CAPACOA as the Conference Coordinator. We are thrilled that Erin remains part of the CAPCOA team and is lending her considerable expertise, skills and passion to the Conference and the Organization.

The Committee began meeting in the Fall of 2024. The first order of business was to establish deliverables and a planning timeline for the 2025 Conference.

2025 CAPACOA Conference Committee Deliverables:

- The conference will be held biannually in Ottawa, with a presence at CINARS in Montreal during off years.
- A fair and transparent hiring process for the conference coordinator will be led by the Executive Director with support from the committee.
- A strategic, sustainable preliminary budget aligned with CAPACOA's mission will be presented by September 20, 2024.
- The conference schedule, reflecting diversity and inclusion, will be drafted by January 30, 2025, and approved by the committee.
- The International Development Market Committee will be integrated into the conference as a CAPACOA initiative to enhance diversity and networking opportunities.
- The Executive Director will represent CAPACOA at the conference, being accessible and involved in key activities.
- The committee will actively engage attendees in planning through feedback to improve future conferences.
- Clear roles and responsibilities for CAPACOA staff related to conference work will be established to ensure workload balance and staff well-being.

The deliverables emphasize inclusivity, strategic planning, transparency, and the well-being of both staff and members.

Once the deliverables were defined, the committee began meeting monthly to plan the conference. Their focus was on creating an event that would showcase outstanding national talent from Canada alongside top-tier artistry from our partner nations. Given the current geopolitical climate, the committee and staff aimed to address the larger challenges facing Canada's cultural sector, while also broadening the scope to include pertinent issues affecting our closest ally nations. At a time when trade is paramount, the committee considered the challenges and opportunities confronting Presenters, Agents, Artists, and Cultural Organizations. These guiding principles shaped every decision made by the committee and staff. We are confident that the conference will provide members and guests with a valuable platform for networking, candid discussions, meaningful connections, and a showcase of exceptional artistry for booking consideration.

The Committee's Role is to establish the direction and goals of the conference. Once the high-level decisions are established, the staff are then able to coordinate and execute each task. Sue and her team have done an incredible job working in collaboration with the committee and bringing the vision to life.

Summary of Activity from September 2024 - August 2025

- Dates: Dec 1-5. 2025
- Location: Ottawa, ON
- Host Venue: National Arts Centre
- Host Hotel: The Alt Downtown
- Theme: RELEVANCE
- “I Wanna Showcase” Applications: Dec 1, 2025 – Jan 30, 2025
    - Deadline was extended to Feb 15, 205
    - Total of Showcase Applications: 230
    - Total number of Showcases: 20
    - Total number of Pitch Applications: 35
    - Total number of Pitches: 24
- International Market Development Committee: Application for funding through CAN EXPORT was submitted, and the grant was successful.
    - IMDC has extended invitations to International Partners to attend
    - IMDC lead and developed International Focused PD sessions in conjunction with the PD Committee
- A new Conference Logo was designed and approved
- Key Note Speaker is confirmed: Carol Off
- Artist Voice Speaker is confirmed: Crazy Smooth
- Schedule Finalized August 2025
- The Professional Development Committee established a schedule and topics. It is currently in the final stages of securing moderators and panellists.
- Registration Open: Thursday, September 4, 2025

Respectfully Submitted by,
Michele Emslie and Angela Campbell
Co-Chairs, 2025 Conference Committee

Appendix C – Finance and Organizational Resilience Committee & Treasurer's Report

Committee Members:

Treasurer/Chair: David Warburton
Members: Glenn Brown, Kevin Korchinski, Laurie Gillis
Staff: Sue Urquhart

CAPACOA completed its fiscal year in a stable financial position, with revenues of $1.883 million and a modest surplus of $11,654. Total net assets increased to $318,484 at year-end, including the $150,000 internally restricted reserve.

The scale and complexity of CAPACOA's work continues to grow. Project revenues exceeded $1.5 million, reflecting the significant range of initiatives being undertaken alongside the organization's core responsibilities to its members and the sector. Arts Data alone represented approximately $650,000 of activity during the year, illustrating both the scale of CAPACOA's project portfolio and the resources required to support it.

For the Finance and Organizational Resilience Committee, this activity also raises important discussions about long term sustainability, especially when these programs are scheduled to sunset. Of particular concern is the future of Arts Data, as well as the increasing demands being placed on the staff team through complex initiatives such as Canada–Ireland and other national and international projects. While these opportunities advance CAPACOA's mission and mandate, we need to ensure that the resources attached to them are sufficient to support the staff time, expertise, and resources to deliver them successfully.

At the same time, CAPACOA must continue to meet its obligations to its staff and members. Our financial sustainability cannot be considered separately from organizational capacity. The Committee continues to look closely at the balance between project growth, core operating resources, staffing capacity and the services members expect from the organization. This is particularly important in an organization whose financial model remains significantly dependent on project-based funding.

The audited results demonstrate responsible financial stewardship, but they also reinforce the importance of maintaining adequate reserves and ensuring that future projects contribute appropriately to the true costs of the organization. Our work in the coming year will continue to focus on ensuring that CAPACOA remains financially sound while explore growth and government requests, and without compromising organizational stability.

I would like to thank the members of the Finance and Organizational Resilience Committee for their thoughtful oversight and contributions throughout the year, and Sue Urquhart and the entire staff team for their continued stewardship of CAPACOA's resources and their work on behalf of our members and the broader presenting sector.

Respectfully submitted by,

David Warburton
Treasurer, Finance and Organizational Resilience Committee

Appendix D – International Market Development Committee Report

Committee Members:
Chair: Gillian Reid;
Members: Margaret Grenier, Ravi Jain, Sherrie Johnson, Raeesa Lalani, Heather Redfern, Pam Patel, Viviane Paradis, Chris Lorway, Lesandra Dodson, David Warburton, Mickaël Spinnhirny, Gabrielle Martin and Charlie Wu.

Ex officio: Sue Urquhart and Natalie Lu

The past fiscal year has been another active one for CAPACOA's International Market Development Committee (IMDC).

Highlights include:

- Participation in Taipei Theatre Week and planning for a fall Delegation to Taiwan
- Coordination of a cohort series with six Canadian artists and producers and six
- Norwegian artists and producers with a focus on northern Norwegian communities with issues/similarities to Canada. Culminated in a gathering of these colleagues in Harstad Norway as part of the Festspillenen Nord.
- Attended PACE in Bloemfontein South Africa in July as part of an exploratory trip to develop future connections with artists from that part of the continent.
- Six presenters attended the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, resulting in five international projects touring within Canada for the 26/27 season.
- Ongoing Korea Canada cohort series culminating in a delegation to PAM in October with nine presenters and artists, including support for the presentation of Assess Masses at the Seoul Performing Arts Festival.
- Six presenters and artists joined the nine participants of the Korean cohort in Taiwan for a 10-day multi-city engagement that involved pitches sessions, b2b's and artist development across three Taiwanese cities: Taipei, Taichung, Kaohsiung
- Five artists and presents took part in a two-day series of meetings in Bogota Colombia in collaboration with the national theatre, followed by a week in Cali at the Cali International Dance Biennale.
- Hosted a Korean familiarization event as part of the 2026 PuSh Festival to draw awareness of the work being done by Canadian and Korean artists and presenters.
- Supported pitches from two Canadian artists as part of CAPACOA's presence at APAM in Perth, Australia. Co-hosted a Canadian networking event with the Canadian High Commission.
- Delegation of four Canadian presenters to PANNZ in Auckland in March as part of ongoing relationship development.
- Hosted 34 international colleagues at the CAPACOA Conference in Ottawa this past December.

As reported at last year's AGM, in July of 2025 members of the IMDC committee contributed to a written Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance of the Fall 2025 Federal Budget. The summary recommendation of the report was that the Government of Canada provide stable funding for export assistance and growth to the Creative Industries by making permanent the Creative Export Strategy under the Department of Canadian Heritage and maintaining its current investment of 19 million dollars. Advocacy continued throughout

the winter, and we are pleased to report that the announcement was made by the Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Honorable Marc Miller, in late spring that the Creative Export Strategy has been renewed with an investment of $95 million over the next five years and will be made permanent with a funding envelope of $19 million per year after that.

The IMDC's International Engagement Strategy 2021-24 expired two years ago, and efforts began in August of 2023 to develop the new strategy document, including research consolidation, data gathering at the provincial and federal levels, input from CAPACOA membership and other stakeholders. The new International Engagement Strategy covering 2025 – 2029 was completed in the summer of 2024 and can be found here.

We would like to take this opportunity to recognize and thank all the 2025-2026 members of CAPACOA's International Marketing Development Committee for their time and dedication: Margaret Grenier, Ravi Jain, Sherrie Johnson, Raeesa Lalani, Heather Redfern, Pam Patel, Viviane Paradis, Chris Lorway, Lesandra Dodson, David Warburton, Mickaël Spinnhirny, Gabrielle Martin and Charlie Wu.

We thank recent past members Jim Smith, Clothilde Cardinal, Kathi Sundstrom, Cathy Levy, Keith Barker, Franco Boni and Erin Kennedy for their valuable contributions over the years.

We also thank consultant Judy Harquail, who is responsible for relationship development, funder advocacy, identification of market access opportunities and coordination of the cultural delegations. This work is supported by Marlene Stirrett-Matson through research, report and grant writing. Ex officio members include CAPACOA Board Chair Glenn Brown, Emeritus Board Chair Natalie Lue and Executive Director Sue Urquhart.

We would also like to acknowledge Global Affairs Canada through their CanExport Associations Program as well as the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Canada Council for the Arts for supporting CAPACOA's International Market Development activity.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gillian Reid
Chair, IMDC

Appendix E – Human Resources Committee Report

Chair: Pam Patel
Members: Gillian Reid, Glenn Brown
Staff: Sue Urquhart

The HR Committee, which was struck following the renewal of CAPACOA's Strategic Plan, continued intentional and gradual work in growing the organization's capacity and resilience. Undeniably, the staff and team at CAPACOA is central to its infrastructure and fundamental in ensuring its sustainability. With this, the opportunity was taken to turn a lens inward and work on improving the care and support that CAPACOA can and does offer to staff and leadership.

Part of the HR Committee's vision is to assess what CAPACOA is doing well regarding care and well-being, and what we can do better. We embarked on some information gathering and utilized assessment tools over the past year that resulted in connecting with an external HR Consultant who continues to work with us towards the objectives and goals outlined in our strategic plan, and towards a vision where care and well-being are infused in the ways of working at CAPACOA, as well as ensuring the organization remains at or above industry standards when it comes to support for employees, contract workers, and of course, leadership staff. We continued the process this year in working towards establishing an employee handbook to help maintain the above goals.

We have also done work this year in gathering information from staff to debrief on major events such as CAPACOA's conference and networks gathering, identifying pinchpoints and gaps in operations. We look forward to unpacking and addressing these pinchpoints while also formalizing those processes that are currently effective and efficient.

The HR Committee would like to acknowledge and thank HR Consultant, Amy Balatoni and Amita HR, who have been a tremendous help so far with providing insight and guidance. We look forward to continuing to work with Amy and her company over the next year.

Respectfully Submitted by:
Pam Patel
Chair of the Human Resources Committee, CAPACOA

Appendix F – Nominations Committee Report

The Executive Committee (Glenn Brown, Gillian Reid, Pam Patel, David Warburton) serves as the Nomination Committee for the Board of Directors.

CAPACOA has a volunteer board of directors where all the demands of effective governance and leadership for the organization comes on top of our respective work commitments among our own organizations. We are fortunate to have such dedicated board members. Our nominations committee wants to thank our current board members who are continuing to work on behalf of CAPACOA and our sector.

Current board members beginning the second year of their current term:

- Pam Patel, Secretary
- Andrea Vincent
- Michele Emslie
- David Warburton, Treasurer
- Jayson Duggan
- Viviane Paradis
- Lesandra Dodson

Current board members who are standing for re-election to a new two-year term are:

- Angela Campbell (first year of third term)
- Kennedy Jensen (first year of third term)
- Glenn Brown (first year of second term)

The nominations committee is not currently putting forward any new nominations for the board of directors for the upcoming term.

We have two long serving members who are stepping down from the board after the annual general meeting. I want to thank Charlie Wu for his years on the board. Charlie contributed a great deal to the work of the International Market Development Committee and contributed his insight and wisdom to the board during our strategic planning project.

Finishing her full six years on the board as both vice-president of the Board and the chair of the international market development committee, we will also see Gillian Reid step down. Gillian has been an incredible force during my time on the board and has set an example of effective leadership and engagement.

Respectfully submitted by

Glenn Brown

Chair, CAPACOA Nomination Committee

Appendix G – Media Coverage

CAPACOA was interviewed twice and signed an opinion piece in Le Devoir.

Le Devoir, Plaidoyer en faveur de l'ouverture des informations décrivant l'offre culturelle, 2025-05-22.

ONFR, Découvrabilité des contenus : les pays francophones enquête de solutions, 2025-05-22.

Radio-Canada Toronto, Dans la mosaïque, 2025-11-21.

> Interview about the UK ban on resale for profit. We also talked about resale fraud and what consumers can do to protect themselves; CAPACOA's support to help presenters outrank resale sites; Ticketmaster's dominant position in the ticketing market.