

Assessing Professional Conditions for Performance Artists in Canada

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONTEXT OF RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

In order to gather information regarding the current conditions offered to performance artists by Canadian platforms, the Artist-Run Centres and Collectives Conference/Conférences des collectifs et des centres d'artistes autogérés (ARCA) circulated an online survey mainly, but not exclusively, throughout the network of artist-run centres and, more specifically, the performance art organizers in Canada. The goal of the study was framed as follows: to inform CARFAC/RAAV of existing best practices of organizations in the artist-run community that either specialize in the presentation of performance or that regularly include performance in their programming. At times difficult to frame within the visual arts field, performance is understood as a variety of forms that include furtive actions, relational projects, durational works, happenings and infiltration projects. The survey's expressed aim was to improve the professional conditions offered to performance artists presenting their work with the support of Canadian arts organizations.

A total of 51 respondents participated in the survey between May 2, 2018 and May 19, 2018.

PROFILE OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Location:

Responses were collected from representatives of organizations located across the country (excluding Newfoundland and Labrador and the Territories). Responses were collected from respondents in Quebec (37.25%) and Ontario (17.65%) in greater proportions, with less than 10% of respondents located in other respective provinces.

Types of organizations:

The majority (58.82%) of respondents identified as representatives of artist-run centres (ARCs)—total of 30 respondents. 9.8% of respondents identified as representatives of performance festivals—total of 5 respondents.

Gaps: Less than 10% of respondents identified as representatives of university or college art galleries (9.8%) and public galleries (3.92%). No respondent identified as the representative of a museum or commercial gallery.

Age of organizations:

The majority of respondents indicated their organization was over 10 years old (74.51% 20+ years; 19.61% 10-20 years).

Gaps: Only 5.88% of respondents indicated that their organization was less than 10 years old.

Annual operating budget:

The vast majority (86.27%) of respondents indicated that their organization has an operating budget corresponding to Category I organizations in CARFAC/RAAV's Fee Schedule (< \$500K).

Gaps: Only 13.73% of respondents indicated that their organization has an operating budget corresponding to Category II organizations in CARFAC/RAAV's Fee Schedule (> \$500K).

KEY FINDINGS: INFORMATION ON ORGANIZATIONS

Revenues: public sources

Core grants from all levels of government constitute the most important source of revenue for survey respondents (average between <5% and 10-25% of overall revenues).

Revenues: private sources

In-kind contributions, donations, and partnerships (cash contributions of programming partners) constitute the most important sources of revenue for survey respondents (average between <5% and 5-10% of overall revenues).

Financial stability:

On average, respondents rated their financial stability as: stable to somewhat stable. Festivals indicated having the least financial stability (average: not very stable), whereas ARCs indicated having the most financial stability (average: stable to somewhat stable).

Percentage of budget dedicated to performance programming

On average, respondents indicated allocating 10-25% and 25-50% of their annual budget to performance programming. Festivals (average between 50-75% and 100%) and other types of organizations (average between 10-25% and 25-50%) indicated allocating more of their budget to performance programming than ARCs (average between 10-25% and 25-50%).

Sources of funding for performance programming

- 1st source of funding: Core funding (all levels of governments)
- 2nd source of funding: Project funding (all levels of governments)
- 3rd source of funding: Partnerships (cash contributions of programming partners)

Festivals did not identify core funding as a main source of funding but identified project funding, earned revenues, and in-kind contributions as primary sources of funding for performance programming. This echoes qualitative findings from a recent capacity and needs assessment study for the independent media arts sector, which highlights the fact that festivals' main sources of funding are often different from that of artist-run centres. The study also mentions further distinctions in these organizations' operations given the cyclical nature of their programming. See *IMAA Sector Innovation and Development: Assessing Sector Needs and Researching New Potential Services* (June 2018) for further information.

KEY FINDINGS: INFORMATION ABOUT PERFORMANCE PROGRAMMING

Percentage of programming dedicated to performance

On average, respondents indicated that between 10-25% and 25-50% of their programming is dedicated to performance. Festivals indicated dedicating a larger proportion of their programming to performance (average between 50-75% and 100%) than ARCs and other types of organizations (average between 0-10% and 10-25%).

Types of events for performance art programming

A greater proportion of respondents indicated programming performance through: one-off events — one artist/collective at each event (62.5%), as part of a group exhibition (47.92%) and in addition to a solo exhibition by the same artist/collective (47.92%).

Festivals indicated presenting performance through annual or biennial festivals (100%), event series (related programming presented throughout the year) — more than one artist/collective at each event (50%), one-off events — more than one artist/collective at each event (50%), and residencies (50%) in greater proportions than other types of respondents.

Spaces in which organizations program performance art

A majority of respondents (50%+) indicated programming performance in the following spaces: site-specific/public space (72.92%), in their organization's exhibition/presentation space (62.5%), in a partner organization's exhibition/presentation space (52.08%).

ARCs indicated programming performance in their organization's exhibition/presentation space in greater proportions than other types of respondents (72.41%).

Festivals indicated programming performance in a partner organization's exhibition/presentation space (100%), site-specific/public space (100%), and third-party rented spaces (75%) in greater proportions than other types of respondents.

Performance programmed through one-off events or event series

	Range	Average
Average number of events in event series per year	1 – 21 (outlier 40)	4.9*
Average number of one-off events per year	1 – 12 (outlier 292)	2.45*
Number of local or regional artists/collectives	1 – 17 (outlier 1060)	3.27*
Number of other Canadian artists/collectives	1 – 20	3.63
Number of international artists/collectives	1 – 9	2.67
Number of emerging artists/collectives	1 – 14	3

*Average excludes outliers.

Admission to performance programmed through one-off events or event series

The vast majority of respondents (93.75%) indicated that admission was free, whereas 21.88% of respondents respectively indicated that admission was ticketed or by donation.

	Range	Average
Average admission cost	Pay what you can – \$40	\$15.83
Average suggested donation*	\$5 – \$10	\$7.50

*Low response rate (<5); listed range and average should serve as indicative measures only.

Performance programmed through residencies

	Range	Average
Average duration of residencies	7 days – 2 months	17.31 days
Average number of artists-in-residence per year	1 – 12 (outlier 80 artists taking workshops)	3**
Number of local or regional artists/collectives*	1 – 2 (outlier 40)	1.5**
Number of other Canadian artists/collectives*	1 – 7	3.3
Number of international artists/collectives*	2 – 3	2.67
Number of emerging artists/collectives*	1 (outlier 45)	1**

*Low response rate (<5); listed range and average should serve as indicative measures only.

**Average excludes outliers.

KEY FINDINGS: PERFORMANCE PRESENTATION ROYALTIES

Performance works in a setting of multiple performances in a single evening

Evaluation of CARFAC/RAAV minimum performance presentation royalties for performances in a single evening:

	Overall respondents	> \$500K operating budget/Category II respondents	< \$500K operating budget/Category I respondents
Category II — Single performance in a setting of multiple performances in a single evening	Too low to adequate	Too low to adequate	
Category I — Single performance in a setting of multiple performances in a single evening	Too low to adequate		Too low to adequate

Note: evaluations based on weighted averages.

Frequency at which respondents pay CARFAC/RAAV minimum performance presentation royalties for performance works in a setting of multiple performances in a single evening:

	Overall respondents	> \$500K operating budget/Category II respondents	< \$500K operating budget/Category I respondents
Exact recommended fees	Sometimes to most of the time	Sometimes to most of the time	Sometimes to most of the time
Lower than recommended fees	Never to sometimes	Never to sometimes	Never to sometimes
Higher than recommended fees	Most of the time to always	Sometimes to most of the time	Most of the time to always

Note: frequencies based on weighted averages.

Major solo performance and inclusion of performance in exhibitions

Evaluation of CARFAC/RAAV 2018 suggested minimum fees for major stand-alone performance and the inclusion of performance in a solo exhibition:

	Overall respondents	> \$500K operating budget/Category II respondents	< \$500K operating budget/Category I respondents
Category II — Major stand-alone solo performance	Adequate to too low	Adequate to too low	
Category II — Inclusion of performance in a solo exhibition	Adequate to too low	Adequate to too low	
Category I — Major stand-alone solo performance	Adequate to too low		Adequate to too low
Category I — Inclusion of performance in a solo exhibition	Adequate to too low		Adequate to too low

Note: evaluations based on weighted averages.

Frequency at which respondents pay CARFAC/RAAV minimum performance presentation royalties for major stand-alone performance and the inclusion of performance in a solo exhibition:

	Overall respondents	> \$500K operating budget/Category II respondents	< \$500K operating budget/Category I respondents
Exact recommended fees	Most of the time to sometimes	Most of the time to always	Most of the time to sometimes
Lower than recommended fees	Never to sometimes	Never	Never to sometimes
Higher than recommended fees	Sometimes to most of the time	Sometimes	Sometimes to most of the time

Note: frequencies based on weighted averages.

Inclusion of performance in group exhibitions and inclusion of performance in group exhibitions in addition to other work by the same artist

Evaluation of CARFAC/RAAV 2018 suggested minimum fees for the inclusion of performance in group exhibitions and the inclusion of performance in group exhibitions in addition to other work by the same artist:

	Overall respondents	> \$500K operating budget/Category II respondents	< \$500K operating budget/Category I respondents
Category II — Inclusion of performance in group exhibitions	Adequate to too low	Adequate to too low	
Category II — Inclusion of performance in group exhibitions in addition to other work by the same artist	Adequate to too low	Adequate to too low	
Category I — Inclusion of performance in group exhibitions	Adequate to too low		Adequate to too low
Category I — Inclusion of performance in group exhibitions in addition to other work by the same artist	Adequate to too low		Adequate to too low

Note: evaluations based on weighted averages.

Frequency at which respondents pay CARFAC/RAAV minimum performance presentation royalties for the inclusion of performance in group exhibitions:

	Overall respondents	> \$500K operating budget/Category II respondents	< \$500K operating budget/Category I respondents
Exact recommended fees	Most of the time to always	Most of the time	Most of the time to always
Lower than recommended fees	Never to sometimes	Never	Never to sometimes
Higher than recommended fees	Sometimes to most of the time	Sometimes	Sometimes to most of the time

Note: frequencies based on weighted averages.

Factors used to determine fees paid to artists outside of the CARFAC/RAAV Fee Schedule

The top 3 factors selected by respondents are: project's budget (fees change from project to project) (48,57%), form of the artwork (intervention, relational project, performance art, furtive action, etc.), and duration of the artwork (short action, long action, durational work, etc.) (40%).

It should be noted that 42.86% of respondents indicated not taking other factors into account and paying all artists the same fee.

Fees for duos or collectives

On average, respondents indicated increasing fees for duos and collectives sometimes to most of the time. The majority of respondents indicated increasing fees for duos and collectives at varying frequencies: sometimes 45.71%, most of the time 14.29%, always 14.29%.

The majority of respondents (62.86%) indicated that the CARFAC/RAAV Fee Schedule should establish fees based on the number participating artists/members in a collective, whereas only 8.57% of respondents indicated that it should not.

KEY FINDINGS: QUESTIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONS THAT PROGRAM ANNUAL OR BIENNIAL FESTIVALS

Information on festivals

	Range	Average
Average duration of festival	One night – 4 weeks	7.15 days
Average number of artists/collectives programmed in a festival	3 – 30	13
Number of local or regional artists/collectives	1 – 15	4.38
Number of other Canadian artists/collectives	1 – 10	4.75
Number of international artists/collectives	1 – 8	4.58
Number of emerging artists/collectives	1 – 14	4.33

Admission to annual or biennial festival

The majority of respondents (78.94%) indicated that admission was free, 31.5% indicated that admission was ticketed, and 21.05% indicated that admission was by donation.

	Range	Average
Average admission cost	Pay what you can – \$65	\$15.28
Average suggested donation*	Pay what you can – \$10	\$4.67

*Low response rate (<5); listed range and average should serve as indicative measures only.

Performance presentation royalties for performances within an ongoing showcase or event (Annual or Biennial Festival)

Evaluation of CARFAC/RAAV minimum performance presentation royalties for performances within an ongoing showcase or event:

	Overall respondents	> \$500K operating budget/Category II respondents	< \$500K operating budget/Category I respondents
Category II — Single performance (Festival): 1st Performance	Too low to adequate	N/A	
Category II — Single performance (Festival): Each Additional Performance	Adequate to too low	N/A	
Category I — Single performance (Festival): 1st Performance	Too low to adequate		Too low to adequate
Category I — Single performance (Festival): Each Additional Performance	Too low to adequate		Too low to adequate

Note: evaluations based on weighted averages.

Frequency at which respondents pay CARFAC/RAAV minimum performance presentation royalties for performances within an ongoing showcase or event:

	Overall respondents	> \$500K operating budget/Category II respondents	< \$500K operating budget/Category I respondents
Exact recommended fees	Sometimes to most of the time	N/A	Sometimes to most of the time
Lower than recommended fees	Never to sometimes	N/A	Never to sometimes
Higher than recommended fees	Most of the time to always	N/A	Most of the time to always

Note: frequencies based on weighted averages.

Additional performance(s) by the same artist/collective in a festival

Most respondents indicated never (31.58%) or rarely (47.37%) programming an additional performance by the same artist/collective in a festival, whereas 21.05% of respondents indicated sometimes programming these events.

47.37% of respondents indicated that the “additional performance” fee category was not relevant, whereas 21.05% indicated that it was relevant.

Long-duration performances

The vast majority of respondents (84.21%) indicated that the CARFAC/RAAV Fee Schedule should include minimum recommended fees for long-duration performances.

43.75% of respondents were in favour of modelling a durational performance fee category after the “additional performance” fee category, whereas 25% of respondents were not in favour.

KEY FINDINGS: OTHER SUPPORT AND CONDITIONS

Frequency at which organizations are able to cover artists’ travel costs

	Overall respondents	ARCs	Festivals	Other organizations
Full amount	Most of the time to always	Most of the time to sometimes	Most of the time to always	Always to most of the time
Partial amount	Sometimes to most of the time	Sometimes to most of the time	Never	Sometimes to never
No support	Never to sometimes	Sometimes to never	Never	Never

Note: frequencies based on weighted averages.

Frequency at which organizations are able to cover artists’ lodging costs

	Overall respondents	ARCs	Festivals	Other organizations
Full amount	Most of the time to always	Most of the time	Always	Most of the time to always
Partial amount	Sometimes to never	Sometimes to never	Never	Sometimes to never
No support	Never to sometimes	Never to sometimes	Never	Never

Note: frequencies based on weighted averages.

Frequency at which organizations offer per diems

	Overall respondents	ARCs	Festivals	Other organizations
Higher than government rates (\$50/day)	Sometimes to never	Never to sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes
Government	Sometimes to most	Sometimes to	Sometimes to	Sometimes to

rates (\$50/day)	of the time	most of the time	most of the time	most of the time
Lower than government rates (\$50/day)	Sometimes to most of the time	Sometimes to never	Sometimes	Most of the time to sometimes
No support	Sometimes to never	Sometimes to never	Never	Never to sometimes

Note: frequencies based on weighted averages.

Sources of funding for travel, lodging, and/or per diem expenses

The majority of respondents (50%+) selected the following sources of funding: project funding (all levels of government) (81.25%), core funding (all levels of government) (65.63%), and shared costs between partner organizations (59.38%).

Festivals selected the following sources of funding in greater proportions than other respondents: project funding (all levels of government) (100%), travel grants (all levels of government) (100%), shared costs between partner organizations (100%), consulate travel support (75%), and in-kind support (50%). Festivals selected core funding (all levels of government) (50%) in lesser proportions than other respondents.

Frequency at which organizations cover production expenses (performance materials, equipment rental, etc.)

	Overall respondents	ARCs	Festivals	Other organizations
Full amount	Most of the time to sometimes	Most of the time to sometimes	Most of the time to always	Most of the time to sometimes
Partial amount	Sometimes to most of the time	Sometimes to most of the time	Most of the time	Sometimes to most of the time
No support	Never to sometimes	Never to sometimes	Never	Never to sometimes

Note: frequencies based on weighted averages.

Other support offered by organizations

A majority of respondents (50%+) indicated offering the following support to artists: photo documentation (94.29%), technical support (88.57%), paid opportunities to give talks/workshops (68.57%), video documentation (60%), free drinks (57.14%), writing about their performance (51.43%), and free meals (51.43%).

Festivals indicated offering all types of support listed in greater proportions than other respondents, except for unpaid opportunities to give talks/workshops, which no respondent selected.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Performance works in a setting of multiple performances in a single evening

Based on survey findings, it is recommended that minimum recommended fees for performance works in a setting of multiple performances in a single evening be increased, for both categories I and II.

Major solo performance and inclusion of performance in exhibitions

Based on survey findings, it is not recommended that minimum recommended fees for major stand-alone performance and the inclusion of performance in a solo exhibition be increased for either categories I or II. It is recommended that ARCA continue to monitor best practices in this area while emphasizing the fact that fees listed in the CARFAC/RAAV Fee Schedule are recommended minimums and that artists may negotiate, and organizations may offer, fees higher than those currently listed.

Inclusion of performance in group exhibitions and inclusion of performance in group exhibitions in addition to other work by the same artist

Based on survey findings, it is not recommended that minimum recommended fees for the inclusion of performance in group exhibitions and the inclusion of performance in group exhibitions in addition to other work by the same artist be increased, for either categories I or II. It is recommended that ARCA continue to monitor best practices in this area while emphasizing the fact that fees listed in the CARFAC/RAAV Fee Schedule are recommended minimums and that artists may negotiate, and organizations may offer, fees higher than those currently listed.

Fees for duos or collectives

Based on survey findings, it is recommended that the CARFAC/RAAV Fee Schedule make recommendations for fees for performance based on the number participating artists/members in a collective.

Performance presentation royalties for performances within an ongoing showcase or event (annual or biennial festival)

Based on survey findings, it is recommended that minimum recommended fees for performances within an ongoing showcase or event (annual or biennial festival) be increased, both for categories I and II, including fees for 1st performance and each additional performance.

Additional performance(s) by the same artist/collective in a festival

Based on survey findings, it is not recommended to remove the “additional performance(s) by the same artist/collective” fee category from the Fee Schedule.

Long-duration performances

Based on survey findings, it is recommended that the CARFAC/RAAV Fee Schedule include minimum recommended fees for long-duration performances presented in the context of an ongoing showcase or event (annual or biennial festival). The option of modelling the durational performance fee category after the “additional performance” fee category should be carefully considered along with other options.

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Issues regarding language and structure of Performance Presentation Royalties in CARFAC/RAAV Minimum Fee Schedule

Issues observed with language and structure

A number of issues regarding the language used in, and structure of, the CARFAC/RAAV Minimum Recommended Fee Schedule in relation to Performance Presentation Royalties have been observed and/or were brought up by survey respondents. Referring to the English version of the Schedule, these include:

“Exhibition

For major stand-alone solo performances and / or the inclusion of performance artworks in group exhibitions, select "Single work" in Solo Exhibition or group Exhibition.”

Issues observed:

- Given the direction to select the “Single work” rate, it is not clear what the proper rates for these respective categories of fees are: major stand-alone solo performance; inclusion of performance in addition to solo exhibition, inclusion of performance in group exhibition, and inclusion of performance in group exhibition in addition to other work by the same artist/collective. Upon consulting with CARFAC, it was determined that fees for these categories should be based on the following rates:
 - Major stand-alone solo performance: solo exhibition rate
 - Inclusion of performance in addition to solo exhibition: single work rate + solo exhibition fee
 - Inclusion of performance in group exhibition: group exhibition fee based on number of artists in exhibition
 - Inclusion of performance in group exhibition in addition to other work by the same artist/collective: single work rate + group exhibition fee based on number of artists in

exhibition

To avoid confusion as to which rates apply, it is recommended that all rates related to major stand-alone solo performance and the inclusion of performance in exhibitions be clearly outlined in a grid under section A.1.5 Performance Presentation Royalties of the CARFAC/RAAV Fee Schedule.

- The term “major” in major solo performance was flagged as problematic by some survey respondents. It is recommended that the term be defined or that a change of terminology be considered.
- The use of the term “gallery” in section A.1.0 Guiding Principles, Recognizing the size of a museum or gallery, in of the CARFAC/RAAV Fee Schedule is exclusive of performance art festivals. It is recommended that a change in terminology be considered (suggestion: presenting/exhibiting institution) to be inclusive of organizations whose activities are not gallery-based.
- The category I fee listed for single performance (festival): 1st performance (single work rate) should be \$399 (as opposed to \$398) to adequately reflect the single work rate. This issue is present in both the English and French versions of the Schedule.

Translation issues

A number of incongruities exist between the English and French versions of the CARFAC/RAAV Minimum Recommended Fee Schedule due to translation issues. It is recommended that translation be outsourced to professional translators active in the field and that translations be reviewed by RAAV and/or other ASOs prior to publication to ensure adequacy and consistency of terminology. Using the English version of the Schedule as baseline, the following issues have been observed:

A.1.5 • Performances

Pour les performances majeures solo, présentées en exclusivité et / ou l'inclusion d'oeuvres d'art performance dans des expositions de groupe, voir la section portant sur les droits d'exposition : (sections A.1.1 ou A.1.3).

Issues observed:

- Use of the term “en exclusivité” to translate “stand-alone” may lead to confusion: the interpretation could be that the performance will not be presented elsewhere, and may therefore be understood in relation to a commission.
- In the English version it is specified to select the “Single Work” rate in Solo or Group Exhibition. This specification is missing in French.

Performance unique (événement unique) : oeuvre d'art performance présentée parmi d'autres performances au cours d'une soirée pour laquelle un seul billet est vendu. Le tarif équivaut à 50 % du tarif pour oeuvre unique approprié pour l'institution organisatrice.

Issues observed:

- Use of the term “pour laquelle un seul billet est vendu” is an inadequate translation of “with single ticket prices” as it implies that only one ticket is sold. Suggested change: “pour laquelle des billets sont vendus à prix unique.”
- Beyond this translation issue however, the concept of “single ticket prices” should be defined by CARFAC, and its relevance in the context of visual and media arts organizations should be considered. For example, in the context of a performance presented in an artist-run centre, there could be tickets sold at regular prices and member tickets sold at a discounted price.
- Further, considering that the vast majority of respondents (93.75%) indicated that admission to performance programmed through one-off events or event series was free and that only 21.88% of respondents respectively indicated that admission to these events was ticketed or by donation, CARFAC should revise the definition of the Single Performance (Single Event) category and consider removing the question of ticket sales altogether from its definition.

Pour les festivals et les événements qui ne font pas partie d'une exposition, les tarifs suivants peuvent être utilisés:

Issues observed:

- This line is wrongly placed; it should logically appear in place of “Définitions” above the paragraph describing “Performance unique (Festival)” to mirror the English version.

The following English statements are missing, in translated form, from the French version:

- “Please note: The fees for **touring exhibitions** are calculated according to the characteristics of each venue on the tour. Users of the calculator should do a separate calculation for each stop.”
- “For **Creation of a work in public** exhibition fees would apply, depending where the work is viewed, whether the regular fees or the Exhibitions in other public spaces category.”