

## Theatre Individual Project Grants March 2021 General Expert Panel Comments

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Comments made by the Expert Panel during its assessment of applications submitted to the March 1, 2021 deadline are outlined below. Please note that these comments provide a summary of the Expert Panel's assessment and do not necessarily relate to every individual application submitted to this deadline. The Expert Panel does not provide individual comments.

### Project Description:

- The Expert Panel was pleased to see so many artists who demonstrated a commitment to diversity, inclusion and the 35/50 initiative both on stage and behind the scenes – through either the list of principal artists, or the outlining of artistic process that made it clear that these artists were integral to the success of the project.
- The Expert Panel gave priority to applications that articulated a unique artistic vision that clearly stood out. It was beneficial when the individuals would present their own personal artistic voice.
- The Expert Panel supported applications that articulated the overall concept and context of their artistic process.
- While the Expert Panel was impressed with, and supportive of the cultural diversity of projects, there was concern over proper representation and appropriation. In these cases, the Expert Panel appreciated when artists provided evidence of community support.
- The Expert Panel was particularly supportive of projects where applicants demonstrated a real passion for their proposal along with realistic timelines, accurate detailed budgets, specific venues and indications of community support.
- Conversely, there were many exciting ideas that the panel were unable to support as key details were missing. There needs to be a clear concise project description.
- The panel appreciated applications which clearly articulated which portion of their project AFA funds were going to specifically support, e.g. "This is to support the workshop portion only."
- The panel members were impressed with those applicants that had detailed COVID-related safety planning to show how they were keeping cast, crew and audiences safe during the pandemic.
- With the pandemic in mind, the Expert Panel were concerned with applications that had no contingency plans if live theatre is deemed not viable during their proposed dates. What was Plan B?
- The Expert Panel was very supportive of original projects or works from Alberta artists and their contribution to Alberta's art ecology. They were especially supportive of projects where there was significant potential for artistic growth, rather than slight variations on the work artists had done previously.
- The Expert Panel was pleased to see that many emerging artists had good support from senior artists within the community.

- The Expert Panel appreciated the breadth of social issues that the projects tackled.
- When productions called for physical or emotional vulnerability, the Expert Panel looked for professionals being brought in to ensure safety.

#### **Professional Development:**

- The panel supported applicants that were able to demonstrate clearly how the proposed training fit within their artistic practice, and how and why this specific training would further their practice.
- The panel members appreciated those applicants who had thoroughly researched programs that were a “good fit” for their talents and articulated long term goals.
- The Expert Panel strongly encourages students to include letters of recommendation.
- Applicants should indicate whether they had already been accepted into the program.
- The panel gave priority to professional development applicants where there was a clear indication of ties to Alberta and that the knowledge would be brought back to be shared.

#### **Budget:**

- The Expert Panel were concerned about viability when a project’s revenue sources were mostly pending and no plan B was indicated should funding from other sources not be realized.
- It was important for applicants to indicate whether funding from other sources was pending or confirmed.
- The Expert Panel were supportive of projects that compensated artists with industry standard or a living wage.
- Expert panel appreciated when applicants demonstrated confirmed additional revenue sources when applicable.
- Budgets should be reflective of the project descriptions. Artists may want to ensure that all production elements are accounted for in their budgets.
- The panel appreciated when applicants showed diverse revenue sources, including commitment from the artists themselves.
- Specificity was appreciated, especially in providing a breakdown of the presented costs.

#### **Support Material:**

- The strength of the whole artistic team, and not just the lead applicant, was important for the Expert Panel. In collaborative projects, biographies and resumes should be submitted for all principal artists involved in the project.
- Emerging artists could benefit with indications of support from mentors and other senior artists.
- The Expert Panel relied on strong support materials in order to determine artistic quality. It was clear when applicants had carefully curated those materials. Many artists may have seen a higher score had appropriate support materials that clearly illuminated the proposed project been included with their application.