

## Theatre Individual Project Grants March 1, 2022 Submissions General Expert Panel Comments

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Comments made by the panel during its assessment of applications submitted to the March 1, 2022 deadline are outlined below. Please note that these comments provide a summary of the panel's assessment and do not necessarily relate to every unsuccessful application submitted to this deadline. **The panel does not provide individual comments.**

### Project Description:

- The panel appreciated the variety of solid applications, but were excited by, and gave priority to, proposals it felt would have a strong impact on either the audience or the theatre ecology in Alberta.
- The panel was excited to see so many applications from a wide range of communities and gave priority to applications that featured communities, voices and points of view that had not been often seen/heard.
- The panel was excited about theatre re-emerging post-covid and were particularly supportive of work happening in Alberta as the local theatre community restarts.
- When looking at large-scale projects, the panel were concerned when resumes did not indicate that participants had the experience and expertise to successfully carry out such scope:
  - The panel stressed that including CVs from other than the principal artists was vital in helping the panel to determine skills and expertise within the team.
- The panel appreciated proposals from artists that had a strong sense as to why this project needs to happen. What is the artistic urgency? What is the artists' connection to the material?
- The panel was pleased to see so many artists demonstrate a commitment to diversity, inclusion and the 35//50 initiative on stage, in leadership, and behind the scenes -- through either the list of principal artists, or the outlining of their artistic process that made it clear these artists were integral to the success of the project and not an afterthought.
  - The panel appreciated when artists provided evidence of support and guidance from the community in question.
- The panel highly ranked projects that were artistically relevant and provided growth opportunity for the artists involved.
- The panel was excited to see emerging artists either collaborating with established artists or being mentored by them.
- The panel gave priority to those artists that were able to indicate how Alberta would benefit from the project. This was especially important with respect to students who travel out of province and out of country to study. How would those acquired skills help the theatre ecology in Alberta?

- The panel read through many proposals and appreciated applications where the applicants took the time to format the proposal in sections, in a concise and precise manner, and without repeating themselves.
- Conversely, there were many exciting ideas that the panel was unable to support as key details were missing:
  - There needed to be a clear concise project description, along with realistic timelines, accurate and detailed budgets, specific venues and indications of community support.
  - Touring artists needed to be very specific regarding venues, per diems, transportation, and other tour-related details
  - Site-specific artists needed to be detailed regarding ticket sales, access to venue, confirmation for use of site, and any safety concerns.
- Applicants needed to ensure they supplied information about their style of artistic practice, their experience and their background. The panel members did not know every theatre and performance artist applying and could only go by what was included (or not) in the written proposal. Applicants should ensure that the project is situated within the context of the artists' journey.
- The panel found many exciting projects had unclear or problematic timelines. Was there enough rehearsal/tech time, did the development time match the stated goals, etc.?
- 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.
- Applicants that applied for self-directed residencies or internships needed to be very clear regarding what budget items the AFA was being asked to support.

#### **Budget:**

- The panel was concerned about viability when the project's revenue sources were mostly pending and no plan B was indicated should funding from other sources not be realized.
- Budget "units" needed to be clearly explained – per actor? per hour? per project? Using the comments section to clarify what the units are and how they are calculated is recommended.
- There were a few projects where applicants confused income and expenses, especially those projects that requested salaries for subsistence:
  - Expenses should show a breakdown of the subsistence, while the income side should show all potential income except for the AFA grant request.
  - Applicants who are just learning about budgets should be clear regarding expenses and revenues and ask for assistance from AFA or mentors if uncertain.
- The panel was supportive of projects that compensated artists with industry standard or a living wage.
- The panel appreciated when applicants showed diverse revenue sources.
- \$15,000 is not a large amount in the greater scheme of things. Budgets should be accurate and contingencies larger than \$150 made the panel question the accuracy of the budget.
- There were many wonderful ideas and concepts the panel members were excited by, but the budgets were not clear, or lacked detail (i.e., if requesting a workshop reading, budgets should indicate number of days, how many actors, how the rates are broken out etc.).

**Support Materials:**

- Support materials should enhance the application by demonstrating artistic style, method of devising, supporting the artists' vision.
- Writing samples should give a feel for the style of the play proposed. Artists should be mindful that the panel will not be reading the entire play and that curated excerpts go a long way in demonstrating writing style and ability.
- If a work had already been created and is being toured or remounted, a sample video demonstrating the subject and quality of the work goes a long way in illustrating the work for the panel members.
- It was sometimes unclear why some support material was provided. Applicants should discuss in their proposal exactly what they want to illustrate with this material, or ensure they have edited their applications to remove non-relevant materials.