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MASC is nothing without our artists

As with many other arts organizations, MASC has been working hard to find solutions to the recent challenges. Starting with the labour dispute between the Ontario Government and the teacher's unions and now the COVID-19 crisis, there have been many impacts on our organization and our artists.

MASC has had to cancel or postpone three of our highly successful and anticipated annual events:

MASC Young Authors and Illustrators Festival: In its 29th year, this high-quality three-day event offers 450 students in Grades 4 to 7 the opportunity to participate in hands-on creative workshops and author readings with some of Canada's finest authors and illustrators.

MASC Arts Awards: In its 22nd year, this heart-warming event is a celebration of students in Grades 6 to 8 who are passionate, creative and would benefit from support to explore his or her artistic development outside the school setting. Winners are awarded a year-round scholarship with a local arts organization to support them in furthering their artistic development.

Festival de danse en milieu scolaire: is a 3-day event organized by MASC in partnership with the Centre d'excellence artistique de l'Ontario, le Centre de danse contemporaine (ODD) and The School of Dance. Entering its 6th year, this highly anticipated event brings together 150 franco-ontarian students from across the province. Participants take workshops, create original choreographies and attend dance performances all led by professional francophone dancers.

Another key impact is the cancellation of our school and community bookings. The total potential loss for artists this year could be \$165,800. In order to alleviate the financial impact on our artists due to the cancellations, **MASC will be paying all of our artists 50% for cancelled bookings due to the school strikes as well as COVID-19, right through to the end of our fiscal year, August 31, 2020.**

*"We feel it is essential that MASC supports our artists, as we recognize that **MASC is nothing without our artists.**" says Micheline Shoebridge, MASC Co-Executive Director.*

MASC is grateful to have been able to make this decision with thanks to a number of our generous supporters. Many of our funders have allowed us to be flexible with how funds are allocated and have agreed to support events despite them being cancelled. This financial support, along with MASC's reserves that we have been building over the past years, are helping us weather these difficult times.

The MASC team is working hard from home, putting our efforts on promoting our artists in an effort to continue to engage with the community through social media. We are also providing key information and resources to artists.

Wendy Hartley, MASC Co-Executive Director speaks on behalf of the MASC community, *"We are grateful for our community's support during this challenging time for all. As we are commonly hearing, **we are in this together.**"*

*Celebrating its 30th anniversary, **MASC** is a charitable organization that annually provides more than 1500 performances and 800 workshops in schools and Communities as well as hosting special events. Working with more than 200 professional artists, MASC offers the community experiences of artistic excellence that awaken the creative process, deepen awareness, encourage understanding and give vivid demonstration of Canada's diversity.*