

Places, Please!

Metcalf Internships
in the Performing Arts
2001-2012





METCALF FOUNDATION

An Open Letter to Funders

Places, please...

Why are there not more internship opportunities in our sector?

A good internship can change a life, an organization, even a sector. An internship opportunity can put someone on the path to acquiring the skills they need to thrive and contribute. Such an opportunity, too, can make a remarkable difference to the organization that hosts and mentors the intern. There has never been a time when robust internship opportunities have been as necessary as now. There is a generation of civic-minded, thoughtful young people emerging who, once engaged, would make enormous contributions to the quality and character of our country for years to come. To get there, they need access, skills, networks, confidence, guidance, and the financial support and security that will enable them to engage in this work. They need a place.

At Metcalf, we believe in supporting workers in the not-for-profit sector through the arc of their careers, from internships through to fellowships and professional renewal sabbaticals. The creation of structured internship opportunities is a crucial first step. Internships are a gateway to leadership, and dynamic leadership is a cornerstone of a strong sector.

Places, Please! highlights some of what we have seen and learned over a decade of focused arts internship programming at Metcalf. While this little book looks at our experience in the performing arts, we have also run an internship program within our Environment Program for the last six years, and have periodically provided internships to other organizations in which we believe deeply. The stories and lessons here are equally applicable across the not-for-profit sector and elsewhere.

Surprisingly, given the transformative effects we have so frequently observed over the course of delivering these internships, such opportunities are not common or widely available. While there is the odd program that provides high quality, paid internships, they are rare. We hope that this book will encourage more funders, private and public, organizational and individual, to consider the extraordinary potential of internships. We need more of them, in more places, across more sectors, for more remarkable people looking to do great things for the benefit of us all.

We hope that you will enjoy this book and its stories of opportunity, achievement, and empowerment. We also hope that you will take up this simple but powerful tool. Metcalf would be delighted to be of any assistance if you wish to explore our approach or experience in more detail. We would also welcome any questions or observations you may have.



Kirsten Hanson
CHAIR



Sandy Houston
PRESIDENT & CEO

In 1999, I received an extraordinary phone call.

It was Sandy Houston, President and CEO of the George Cedric Metcalf Charitable Foundation. He said that the Foundation had decided to invest more money in the arts. All I could say was, “I beg your pardon?” In more than 20 years of working in the not-for-profit performing arts, no one had ever said this to me before.

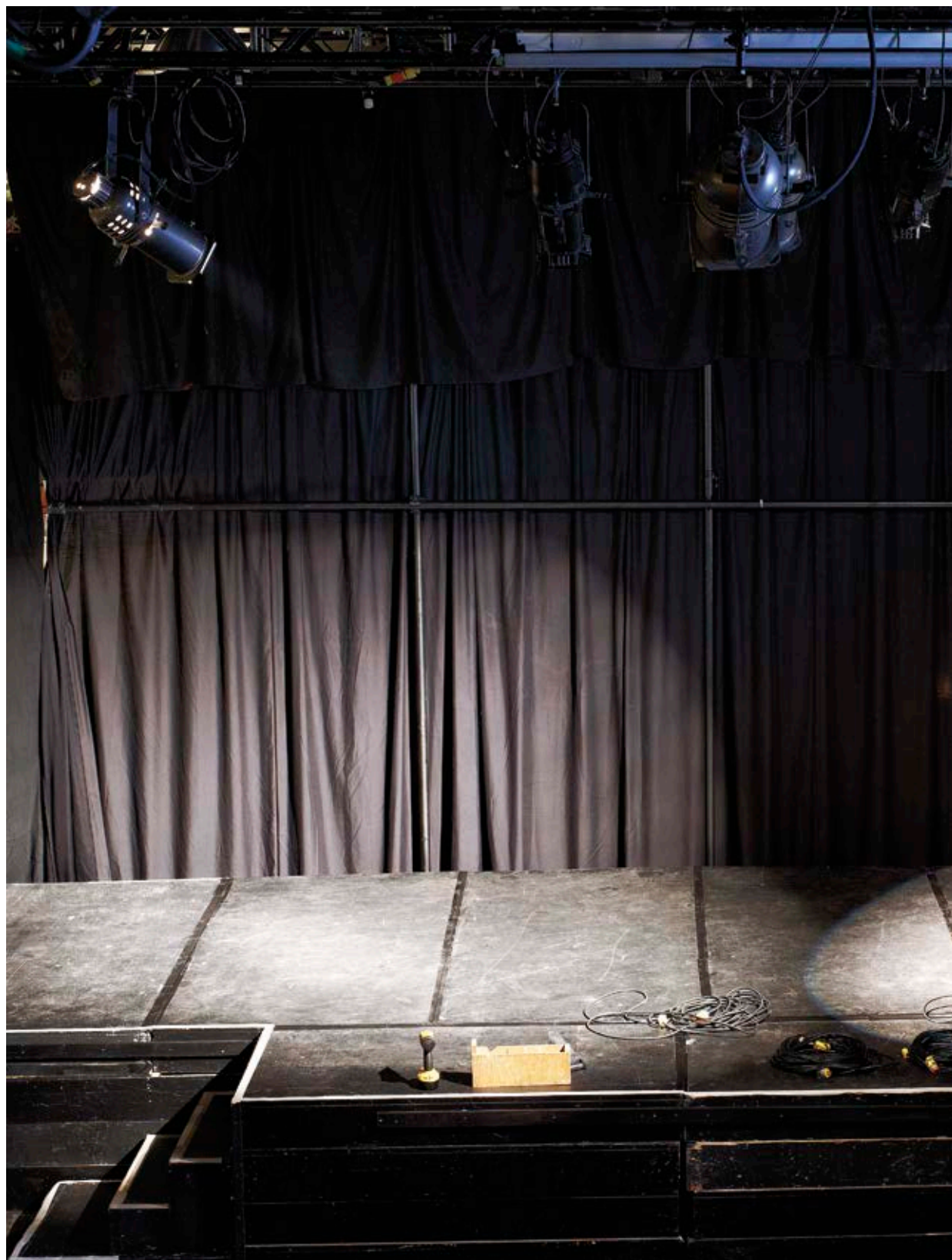
But yes, I had heard correctly. The Foundation wanted a more focused and deliberate approach than in the past. Would I help them shape that approach? I certainly would!

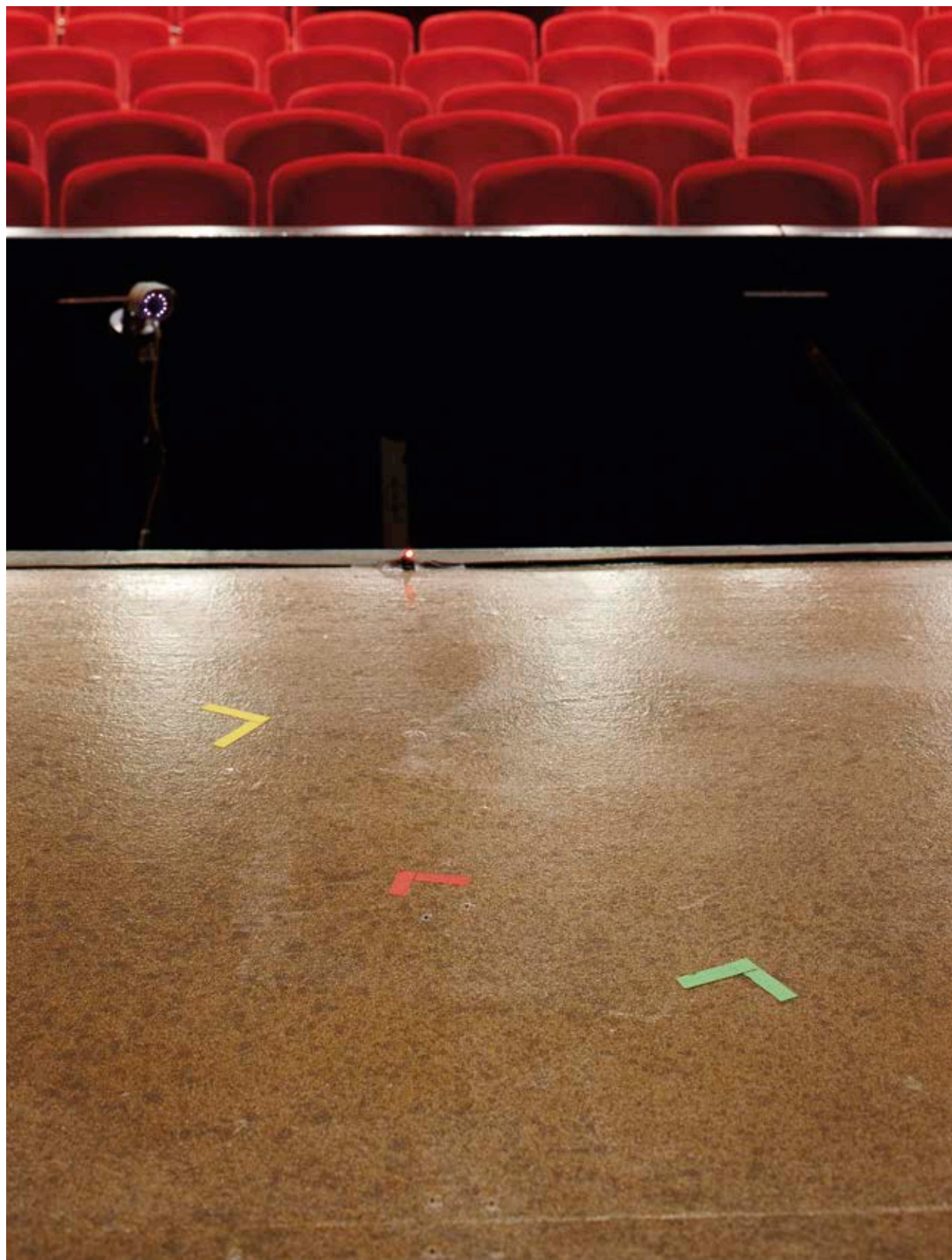
What an amazing opportunity. Sandy’s call set me on a challenging and wonderful journey with the Foundation. I was privileged to work with them to develop the new Performing Arts Program, to launch it in 2001, and to be the Director of the program for the next seven years.

Now, twelve years after the Performing Arts Program was launched, the Foundation has asked me to tell the story of one major piece of the Foundation’s work in the performing arts: the internship program. To do so, I went back to the first documents about the creation of the program. I reviewed dozens of reports, and talked to interns, mentors, and advisors. I revisited the program review we undertook in 2006, which was the Foundation’s first formal program assessment. I interviewed both Sandy Houston and the program’s current Director, Michael Jones.

This paper describes the Foundation’s experience: the many rewards, multiple challenges, significant lessons, and sometimes surprising impact of internships.

CATHERINE SMALLEY
OCTOBER 2012





How did it all begin?

In 1998, the Foundation received a large bequest from the estate of George Cedric Metcalf that was a catalyst for a profound transformation of its work. Metcalf, now a large foundation, began a process of thinking through its areas of focus and strategic approach. The first area of our work to be renewed was in the performing arts. In search of deeper relationships and more meaningful impact in this sector, the Board asked themselves an important question: “What could happen if we approached our arts funding in a completely different way?”

To answer this question, Sandy and I worked with the Foundation through a year of community consultation, sector assessment, discussion, and program development. The focus for the new Performing Arts Program emerged in response to particular issues identified in that process and was based on certain assumptions about the environment for the arts at that time.

We recognized that the performing arts are collaborative and labour-intensive. It takes a myriad of highly trained people—artists, producers, administrators, craftspeople, technicians, facility staff—to make a professional performance possible. The people in a performing arts organization, whether onstage or off, are its most crucial resource.

Historically, assistant and apprentice positions had been important and effective ways for the sector to nurture and develop its human resources. But many years of cuts to operating budgets in the 1990s, combined with profound political, economic, and social changes, had really challenged performing arts organizations. These positions had virtually disappeared from operating budgets, severely limiting access to training, mentoring, and meaningful work experience.

Here was an excellent intersection of the Foundation’s interests, a real need in the performing arts, and the possibility of broad positive impact. The Foundation decided to support training and professional development for creative artists, administrators, and production staff.

At the heart of this work is the Metcalf internship program.

Internship programs aren't new. In the arts, government-run job creation initiatives have come and gone, typically designed to meet the needs of the funders, rather than reflect the realities and needs of the sector. Since this limited their effectiveness, our question was "Could we strengthen the impact of what we were doing, by how we did it?"

Through this program, we want organizations to offer good work placements that will provide interns with more knowledge, better skills, broader work experience, and useful contacts. All of these things will help them make a stronger professional contribution to the field. We also hope to encourage a shift in perspective at host organizations. We want to encourage them to reaffirm their commitment to the future strength of the sector by providing these formal opportunities for mentoring and training.

We want performing arts companies to use the program to provide entry points to bright and capable people in the early stages of their careers. By becoming host organizations for Metcalf interns, they can realize opportunities to foster leadership or respond to skill shortages in critical areas. They can encourage the sharing of the rich experience and specialized knowledge that exists throughout the field.

Sandy Houston says, "This program recognizes the way the arts sector has always prepared the next generation to create the work. This is how knowledge, skills, and confidence are instilled in people. It's best done in a thoughtful and deliberate way, so the Foundation is trying to empower what's good out there with resources and attention. And that's what we ask of the companies, too."



Internships are very important. Though colleges and universities try to emulate professional production situations, these valuable experiences still exist in a somewhat artificial situation. People need real experience. Internships are a bridge, and very valuable.

PHILLIP SILVER

FREELANCE DESIGNER; DEAN EMERITUS, FACULTY OF FINE ARTS, YORK UNIVERSITY
METCALF FOUNDATION PROGRAM ADVISOR (2004–2012)

To try to achieve all of this in a way that is meaningful to the sector, our program has several distinctive attributes:

1. Intern placements are paid full-time employment (to a maximum of \$27,500) and can be up to a year in length.

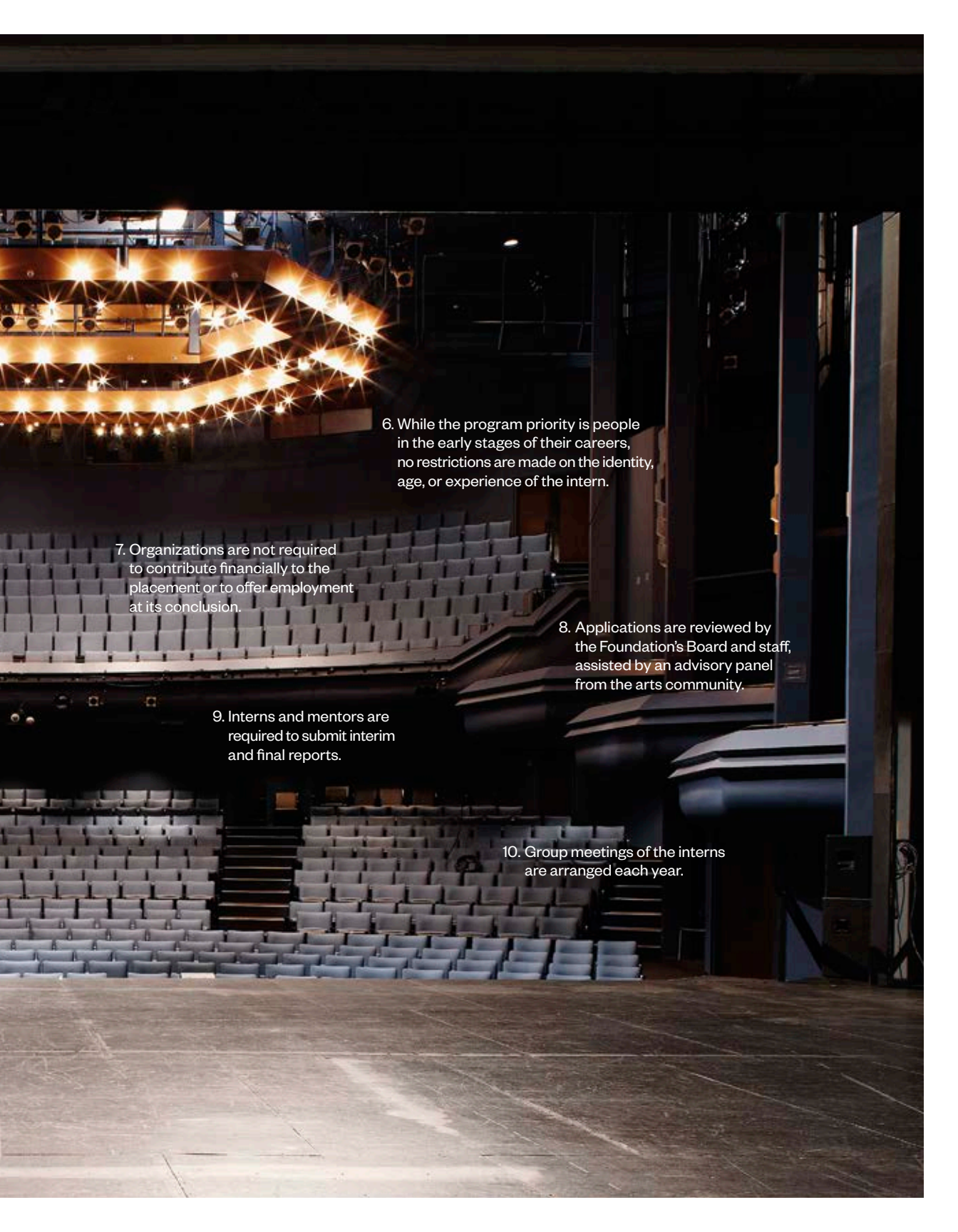
2. Organizations must identify the prospective intern when they apply.

3. The application must also identify the mentor—the person or people who become responsible for the intern's training and for overseeing their work.

4. Both intern and mentor must explain why they have chosen the other, and what learning and career goals the placement will address.

5. Organizations are required to describe a detailed training plan that has been devised with the intern.





6. While the program priority is people in the early stages of their careers, no restrictions are made on the identity, age, or experience of the intern.

7. Organizations are not required to contribute financially to the placement or to offer employment at its conclusion.

8. Applications are reviewed by the Foundation's Board and staff, assisted by an advisory panel from the arts community.

9. Interns and mentors are required to submit interim and final reports.

10. Group meetings of the interns are arranged each year.

Our program launched in 2001.

The community responded strongly. We watched, with great interest, how the initial internships played out. I convened our first intern meeting in 2002. To bring this group of smart, focused, energetic, and articulate people together was a joyful experience. In a spirited discussion, they talked about themselves, their work in the arts, and what an internship meant to them. They made suggestions to strengthen the program. They described their hopes for the future and networked with one another. Every year, the reaction from Board members or other invited guests who attend these gatherings is the same—the meetings are completely inspiring.

Mentors, too, were letting us know that the process was both challenging and positive for them and for their organizations. Ruth Howard, Artistic Director of Jumblies Theatre, noted that mentoring encouraged an important transition within her company. “When you are mentoring in a small company, you have to get used to working with other people on a regular basis and learn how to include and accommodate them.” Her first Metcalf mentorship helped her learn to deal with a larger and more consistent staff, and this helped Jumblies to develop. She went on to say, about mentoring within Jumblies’ community-engaged arts practice, “It’s so rewarding to witness the interns having transformational experiences as they build their own relationships with diverse community members. Mentoring is a tangible commitment to the future—not an abstract notion. It’s great to know that you are developing leadership and nurturing the broader field, not just your own company.”

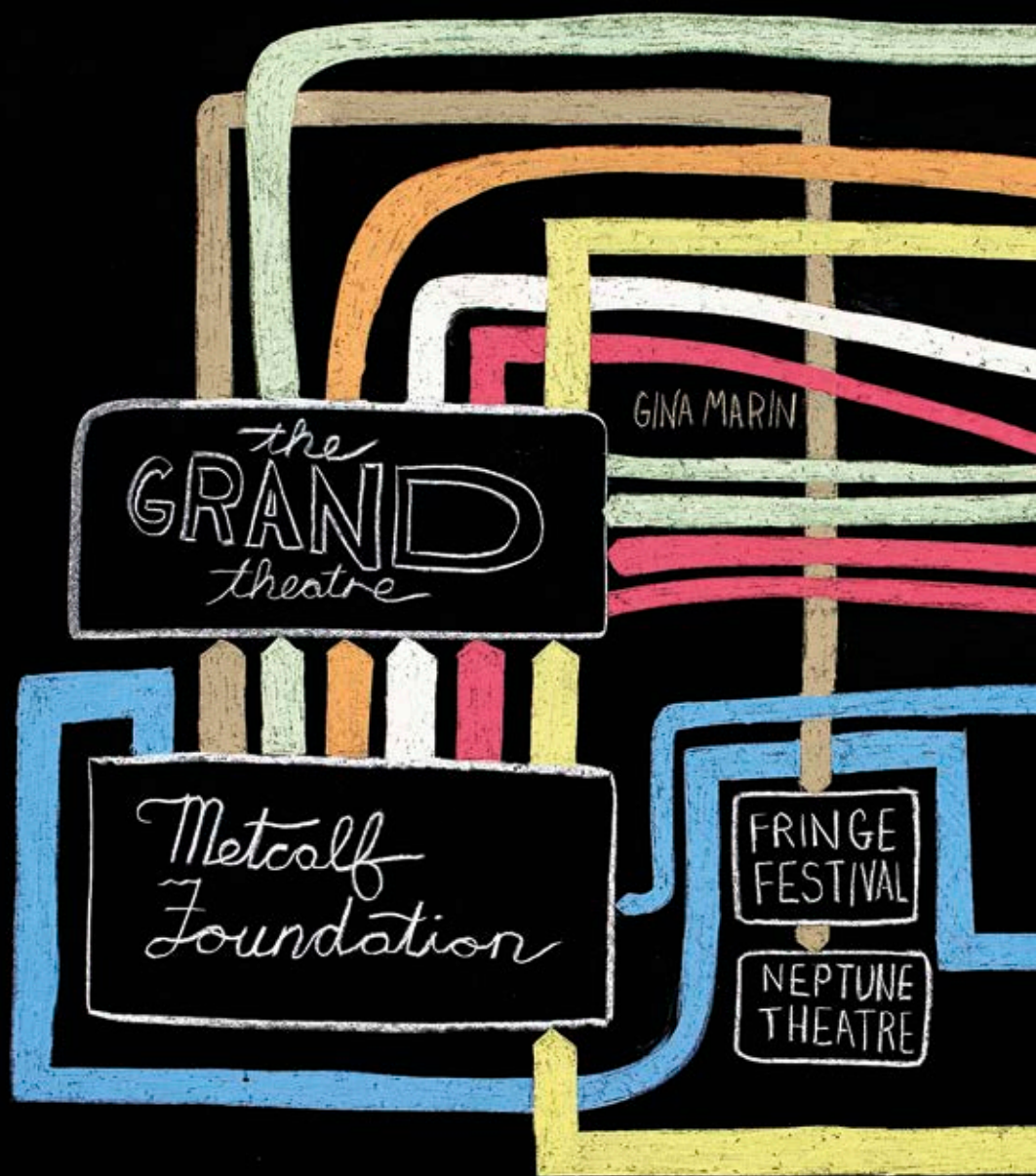
This Metcalf internship has been the ultimate in transformative experiences. It has made me question myself as an artist. It has opened my eyes to more possibilities. It has pushed me to take ownership of who I am as a creator. As an actor, I was meandering, dissatisfied with myself as an artist. When I started writing, I discovered the need to tell stories and not just act in them. But it wasn't until I was building props in the basement that I realized I am a visual artist. I like to tell stories in pictures and shapes, through bodies, sets, costumes, props, and staging. Before my internship, I was not aware of that fact. And now I have developed the skill to create stories in a myriad of ways. The scope of my skills and my career has grown exponentially through this experience.

KATE FENTON

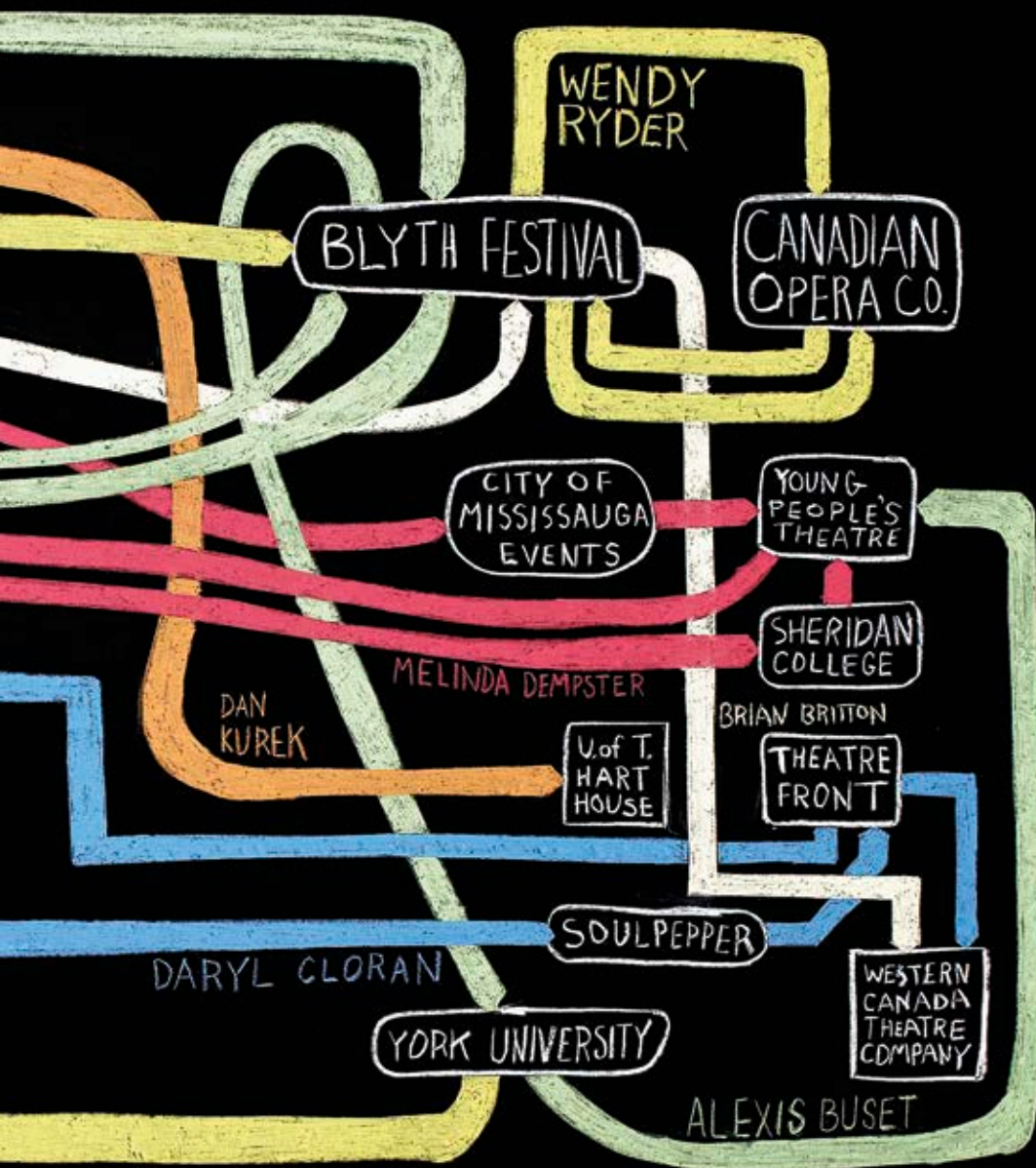
FREELANCE DIRECTOR; ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, THE QUICKENING THEATRE
2009 METCALF INTERN (DIRECTING, PRODUCTION), YOUNG PEOPLE'S THEATRE



Building Networks



Opening Doors





What has happened?

As of October 2012, the Foundation has invested more than \$4 million and supported 200 internships. Whether at their host organization or in other companies, 86% of interns have continued to work in the field after their internships.

Every year, we have been introduced to a new cohort of remarkable interns. A group of strongly engaged mentors has emerged as well. You can see their enthusiasm, commitment, and eloquence in the quotes and stories we are sharing with you.

Interns and mentors have learned in both expected and unexpected ways. Needless to say, we have learned from them. Over the years, in hundreds of reports and interviews, we have had consistent messages from interns and mentors about the process of mentoring.

Interns say that a good mentor ...

understands
your career
path and what
you want to
learn

takes the time to
explain things,
gives you context
and clarity

always has
time for you

gives you meaningful
responsibility; is never
afraid to let you try

involves you in
everything, introduces
you to everyone

communicates
well

becomes
a partner

challenges you
to have ideas
and make a
contribution

is respected,
capable,
knowledgeable;
a fount of
information

makes you
want to be a
mentor, too

PAUL SPORTELLI
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC, SHAW FESTIVAL

and a good placement...

really boosts your
confidence

gets you in the game,
is a catalyst, a catapult,
kick-starts your career

gives you credibility;
a stronger platform to
build your career on

makes you stronger
and more capable;
builds your skills,
gives you insight

comes at the right
time for you

is long enough to
be meaningful

has a good balance
between listening
and observing, and
learning by doing

makes you feel part
of the team, shares all
the resources of the
company with you

injects young people
into places where
there often aren't any

gives you real work
experience; puts you
in the thick of it

Mentors say that a good intern...

provides new
insights into
the company's
practices

has curiosity and
passion, appetite
and enthusiasm

isn't afraid to make
a mistake, learn,
and move on

brings a very different
approach and energy
to a company

reminds us what
it's like to be fresh
and excited

knows what they
want and need,
and why they
want to be there

has a drive
to succeed
in the field

asks lots of
questions, and
listens well

is adaptable

goes in with
eyes and
mind open

does as much
as possible, stays
late, says yes

brings very
important skills
in new media
technology

takes initiative
in creating the
work plan and
doing the work

KIERA SANGSTER

FREELANCE ARTIST
2011 METCALF INTERN (CHOREOGRAPHY), SHAW FESTIVAL

and that the process of mentoring...

is immensely
rewarding

requires focus
and commitment

makes you think
about how and
why you do things

keeps you
young and not
complacent

can be time
consuming and
exhausting

challenges you
to stay on top
of your game

makes a vital
contribution to
building the
sector

builds significant
and enduring
relationships

Lise Ann Johnson

Nurturing Leadership



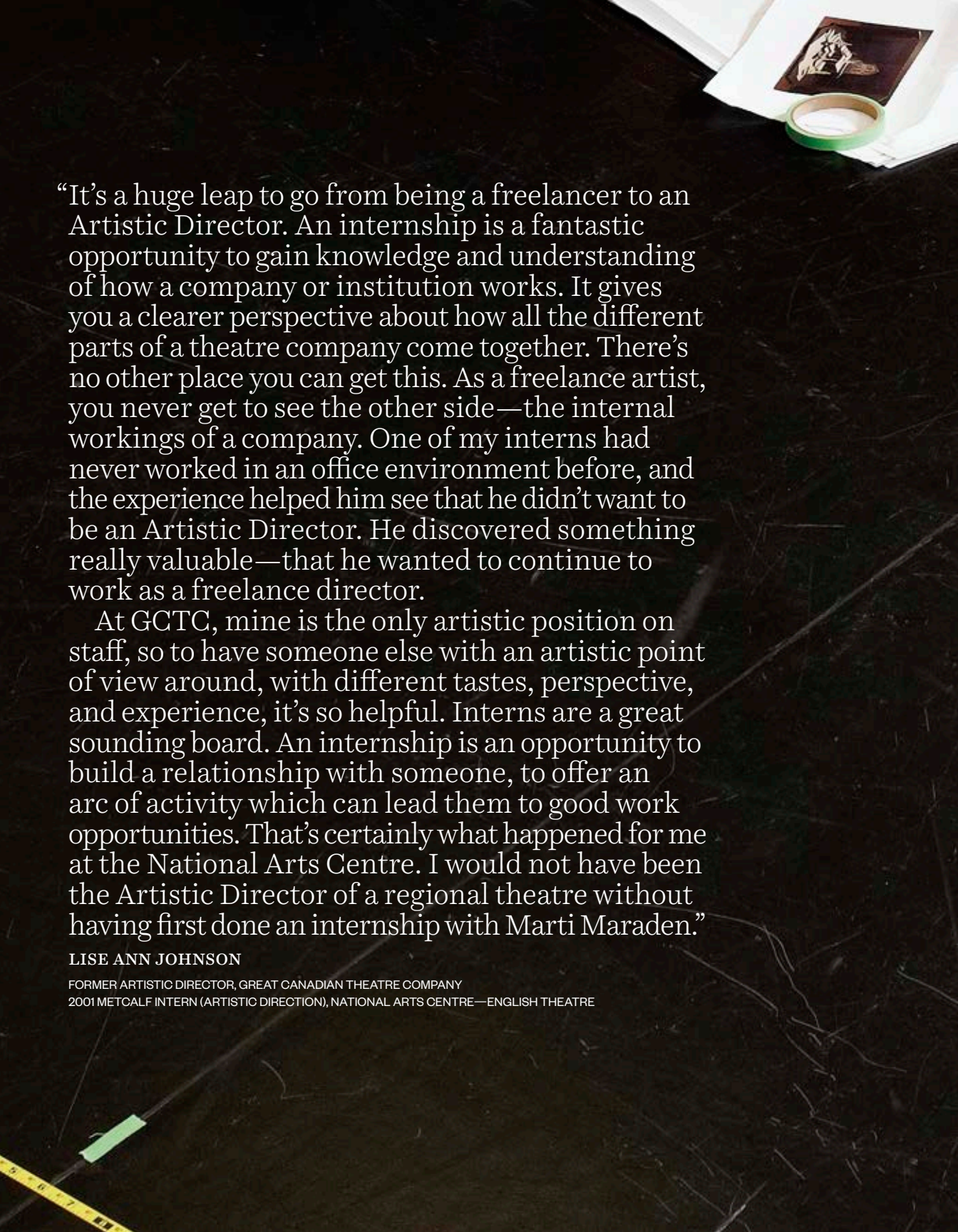
In 2001, the National Arts Centre was working to expand its internship efforts. One area in particular where they saw a need was artistic direction. Marti Maraden, Artistic Director of the NAC English Theatre program, knew that “most artistic directors come to their first position without the opportunity to have any real training in running a theatre company.”

At the time, Lise Ann Johnson was a young director and dramaturg based in Ottawa. She was working on a freelance basis with small independent theatres, but she wanted to be an Artistic Director. She worked for the NAC on a contract to coordinate their new play festival, *On The Verge*. She was noticed. Staff at the NAC told Lise Ann about the new Metcalf internship program. They offered her the chance to work with Marti Maraden in a year-long internship in artistic direction. This became one of the first placements that Metcalf funded.

Lise Ann described her experience as “immensely enriching, giving me skills, knowledge, and contacts that will help me in my goal of becoming an Artistic Director.” Her work was so beneficial to the NAC that she was kept on as Artistic Associate and Literary Manager.

In 2005, Lise Ann became the Artistic Director at the Great Canadian Theatre Company, an established regional theatre in Ottawa. She eventually applied to mentor others at GCTC through the Metcalf program.





“It’s a huge leap to go from being a freelancer to an Artistic Director. An internship is a fantastic opportunity to gain knowledge and understanding of how a company or institution works. It gives you a clearer perspective about how all the different parts of a theatre company come together. There’s no other place you can get this. As a freelance artist, you never get to see the other side—the internal workings of a company. One of my interns had never worked in an office environment before, and the experience helped him see that he didn’t want to be an Artistic Director. He discovered something really valuable—that he wanted to continue to work as a freelance director.

At GCTC, mine is the only artistic position on staff, so to have someone else with an artistic point of view around, with different tastes, perspective, and experience, it’s so helpful. Interns are a great sounding board. An internship is an opportunity to build a relationship with someone, to offer an arc of activity which can lead them to good work opportunities. That’s certainly what happened for me at the National Arts Centre. I would not have been the Artistic Director of a regional theatre without having first done an internship with Marti Maraden.”

LISE ANN JOHNSON

FORMER ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, GREAT CANADIAN THEATRE COMPANY
2001 METCALF INTERN (ARTISTIC DIRECTION), NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE—ENGLISH THEATRE

Patrick Gauthier was one of the interns with whom Lise Ann shared her experience at GCTC.

“One advantage of the internship was observing the day-to-day running of the GCTC team and having the chance to be part of that. I attended weekly staff planning meetings and retreats, sat in on departmental meetings where appropriate, and liaised daily with members of the production, administrative, development, and marketing departments. This was advantageous, as it allowed me to carry out artistic tasks with an eye to their administrative implications, or to look at artistic choices within the context of our operational constraints. An effective Artistic Director, I have learned, must provide a passion for their art with a healthy dose of pragmatism. Artistically, I have had the opportunity to evaluate many different approaches to theatre creation and have taken what I believe to be the best elements to use in my own practice.”

PATRICK GAUTHIER

FREELANCE THEATRE ARTIST

2009 METOALF INTERN (ARTISTIC DIRECTION), GREAT CANADIAN THEATRE COMPANY

What have we learned about our program specifically?

All Metcalf programs include opportunities for experimentation and learning. We work to build strength in individuals or organizations, in a community or in a sector. We hope to shift values and perspectives regarding the issues with which we are engaged. As a result, some of the impact of our funding is emergent and takes time to understand. The Foundation made several key choices in the design of the program that we hoped would strengthen its impact. We've learned that many of our choices have been effective in moving us toward these goals.

Investing in paid and extended full-time employment yields results:

Having sufficient time in an internship placement to be part of the whole cycle of an organization's activities brings richness and depth to the placement. It allows time for the intern and mentor to develop their working relationship and adjust the training plan. It gives interns a chance to see the fruits of their work and to build their resumé and contacts. Being paid a decent salary allows them to focus on the opportunity they have been given.

It was a paid internship. This is huge. It means something on a resumé to say you were a Metcalf Intern. It gives you the "in" you need, and makes it possible to survive financially as an artist for a full year, which is a very rare thing.

ALEXANDRA SEAY

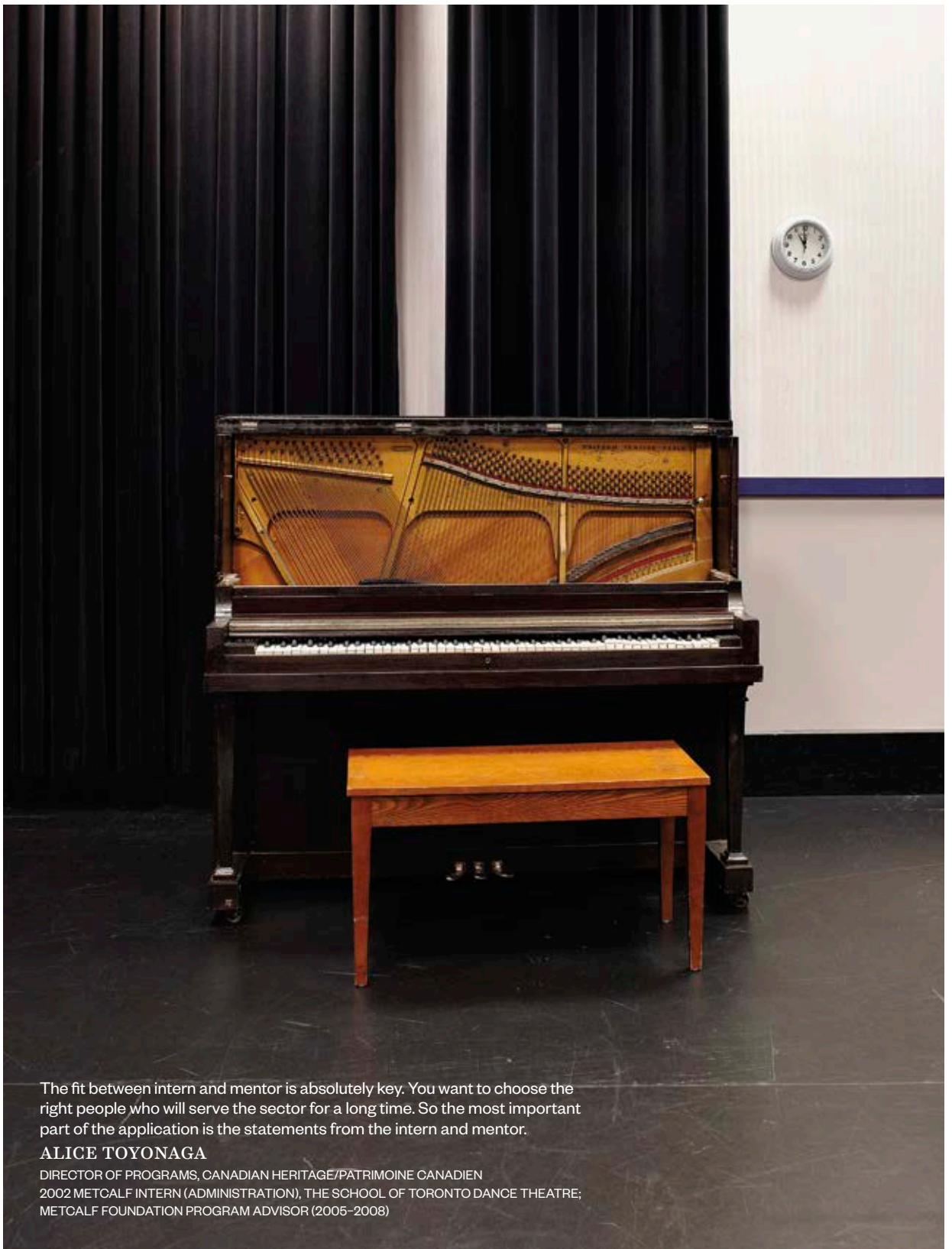
FREELANCE DIRECTOR
2006 METCALF INTERN (DIRECTING),
MODERN TIMES THEATRE

What makes the program really valuable is the length of time. It's extraordinary, a real luxury. It makes all the difference. You can't grow as an artist without these safe places to learn. You are blessed when you have a home.

JOVANNI SY

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, GATEWAY THEATRE
2003 METCALF INTERN (ARTISTIC DIRECTION),
CAHOOTS THEATRE





The fit between intern and mentor is absolutely key. You want to choose the right people who will serve the sector for a long time. So the most important part of the application is the statements from the intern and mentor.

ALICE TOYONAGA

DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS, CANADIAN HERITAGE/PATRIMOINE CANADIEN
2002 METCALF INTERN (ADMINISTRATION), THE SCHOOL OF TORONTO DANCE THEATRE;
METCALF FOUNDATION PROGRAM ADVISOR (2005-2008)

That internship was a turning point in my life, and THE turning point in my career. The company says “we are choosing you for a year.” It feels like such a privilege. I learned that arts administration, producing, was very creative. You can express yourself, without having to be an artist, because you put the artists in the room.

KATE FENNEL

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS, ROYAL WINNIPEG BALLET SCHOOL
2007 METCALF INTERN (PRODUCING), NECESSARY ANGEL THEATRE COMPANY

A strong relationship between the mentor and intern matters:

The Foundation places significant importance on hearing the individual voice, perspective, and passion of both the intern and mentor. Why is the mentor prepared to commit time and resources to this intern? Why did the intern choose this particular mentor or company? Have they shaped the application together? Working this relationship out ahead of time reduces the risk of a disruptive waste of time, effort, and resources for both the intern and the organization.

Goals for learning need, from the outset, to be mutually developed and clear:

What are the intern’s learning and career goals, and how will they be realized? The application must include a training plan that reflects these goals, devised by the mentor and intern together. The Foundation looks for placements that provide both supervised work and the chance for independent activities, opportunities for increased responsibility through the internship period, and external professional development opportunities relevant to the learning goals. We want to understand how this investment will make a tangible difference for the intern and the professional development needs of the discipline.

A broad view of success is useful:

Making a seamless transition from an internship to a work opportunity is wonderful, of course. But there are other ways to define a successful internship, hence our emphasis on more knowledge, better skills, broader work experience, and useful contacts. Interns tell us that just being able to say they were a Metcalf intern gives them an advantage in looking for work and developing their own projects.

Despite the fact that organizations are not required to offer interns employment at the end of the placement, work opportunities have been a common result of the program. Many organizations, having invested a year in the development of a bright, committed intern and appreciating the impact of their work, have kept them on staff. Or, as a result of contacts made during an internship, work has often been offered to interns at other organizations. Whether at their host organization or in other companies, 86% of interns have continued to work in the performing arts sector.

Sitting on the advisory committee is inspiring in many ways. There is so much going on in the performing arts, reading the applications really helps you to see what people are trying to do. You are required to give time to companies you may not have otherwise, and you learn from the other advisors. The committee conversations are enlightening. It's been an education for me.

PHILLIP SILVER

FREELANCE DESIGNER; DEAN EMERITUS, FACULTY OF FINE ARTS, YORK UNIVERSITY
METCALF FOUNDATION PROGRAM ADVISOR (2004-2012)

Not restricting the identity, age, or experience of the intern opens doors:

We decided it was important to allow for the broadest possible pool of intern candidates. So the program generally, but not exclusively, focuses on people in the early stages of their careers. This flexibility has allowed other types of applications to emerge, for example, from someone who wants to make a transition from one position to another as a career evolves. In the past few years, some of the grants have gone to more mature and established artists looking to develop mentoring relationships with senior artists who can guide them through the challenge of establishing and running their own independent companies. Though unanticipated, we are glad that this evolution in the use of the program has been possible.

Using outside advisors strengthens the assessment process:

The Foundation first began to involve outside advisors in its work when it created the new arts program. We have found that experienced and knowledgeable advisors bring great insight to the task of assessment. Their opinions, both on specific applications and broader policy issues, are highly valued.

Vigorous discussion allows the panel to share their knowledge, expertise, and opinion, all of which informs the Foundation's final decisions regarding applications. As they are an advisory panel, and not a jury with decision-making powers, we do not require consensus from them, but rather a vigorous airing of the merits of the applications. The advisors also promote the program in the field, help the Foundation to review policy issues, and keep Metcalf abreast of issues and events in the sector.

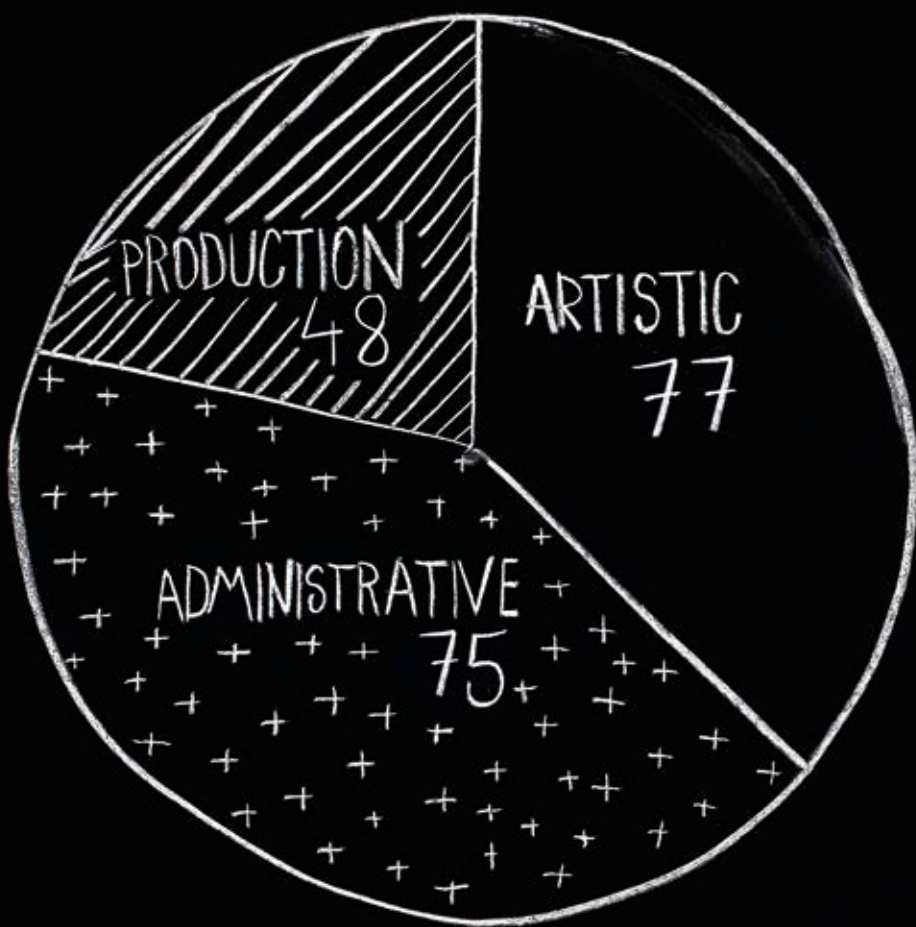
Group meetings of interns reinforce program impact:

These meetings, aside from being fun and inspiring, give the Foundation a chance to describe its program goals and to ask questions about the realities of working in the field. By introducing interns to one another, we encourage them to build a network of colleagues across disciplines. When the experience and insight of interns is shared with each other and with the Foundation, we all learn.

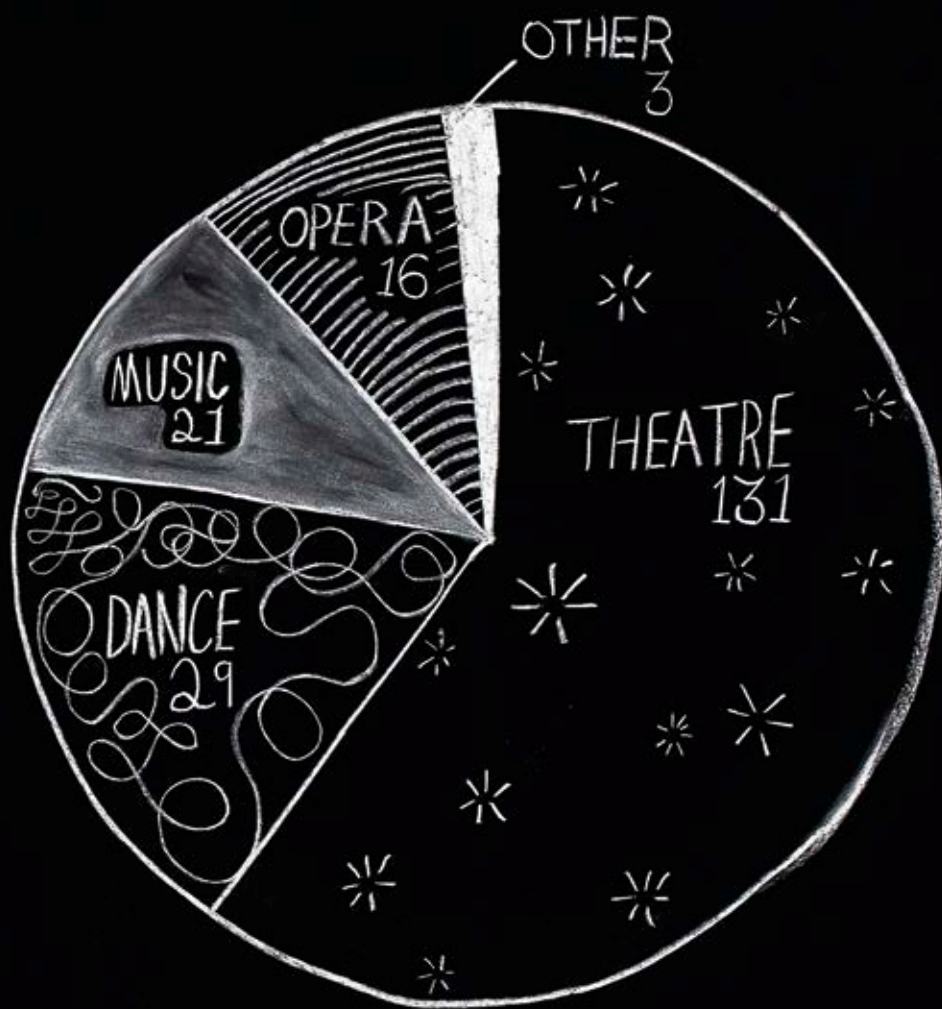


Metcalf Internships

BY POSITION



BY DISCIPLINE



Roxanne Duncan and Meredith Potter

Inspiring Beginners

Meredith Potter is the veteran General Manager of two small but vibrant arts organizations devoted to new creation: Volcano, Ross Manson's theatre company, and Peggy Baker Dance Projects. The opportunity to work in two disciplines, with Meredith and two highly regarded senior artists, has been given to several interns. But Meredith's participation in the program actually began with a proactive intern.

In 2007, Roxanne Duncan was in Edinburgh. She went to the Edinburgh Festival and was deeply impressed with the work of Ross Manson and Volcano. She arranged a meeting with him to express her interest in his work. At his suggestion, when she returned to Toronto she got in touch with Meredith to talk about the possibility of an internship. They "clicked" right away, and the application was made that same year.

"To get a year was so fantastic—I got to sink my teeth into things. It helped me understand what I was good at and enjoyed, and what else I needed. It gave me an entry to my career in arts management. It's hard to know how I would have moved forward without it. I found a way to have an impact on something I value, and a lot of people never get that."

ROXANNE DUNCAN

GENERAL MANAGER, THE THEATRE CENTRE

2006 METCALF INTERN (ADMINISTRATION), VOLCANO AND PEGGY BAKER DANCE PROJECTS

volcano+cmc an underground
opera



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A 2.1

“I love to inspire excitement in interns and introduce them to what it is like to work closely with artists in a small R&D environment. Arts management training is so important, and it is rewarding to know you are helping to build very necessary arts management brains. It’s a contribution to the field.

Roxanne Duncan was our first intern; it was her drive that really got the ball rolling, and she’s gone on to a rich and varied career. It’s been interesting to see what has happened with all of our interns. We are so impressed with the impact of a recent intern, Meaghan Davis, that we have gone after additional funds to keep her with the organizations.”

MEREDITH POTTER

GENERAL MANAGER, VOLCANO AND PEGGY BAKER DANCE PROJECTS

Three things we learned.

After five years and 90 internships, we were very curious to know more about the impact this kind of intervention was having on the people and organizations we'd supported. By that time, we felt we had a critical mass of experience, observation, and information to review. Outside assessors were hired to conduct surveys and interviews with interns and mentors. A summary of key findings from their report, *Opening Doors: The First Five Years of the Metcalf Foundation's Performing Arts Program*, is available from the Foundation's website.

The reviewers noted the obvious benefits of internships, and agreed that the program's design—and grantees' interaction with the Foundation—contributed to its success. They also commented on broader impacts of the program that they discovered during their research.

The findings of the review encouraged us to continue the program without significant changes. They also confirmed our assumptions in three important areas.

1.

Organizational learning and change

The self-directed learning of the intern can impact the mentoring organization as well. This is particularly true for smaller organizations. They report that an intern can create as much change within the company as the experience can offer to the intern. With a bright and capable intern in place over a long period of time, leaders of these organizations must consider issues from the point of view of another professional. They are forced to conceive of the organization as more than an extension of themselves. This can change the way they think about their work.



2.

The importance of networks

The network of contacts created through these internships serves as a source both for future employment and for advice and knowledge. The impact of this networking is found at the individual, organizational, and sectoral levels.

Owing to the nature of the selection process, having had an internship grant can become a label of legitimacy for the intern. Over time, these grants may provide distinctiveness for former interns in the labour market.



3.

Broad sectoral impact

Mentors want to provide an education for interns beyond specific skills. The evaluators found that a very important part of the experience is learning the social conventions of the organization and developing a network within the sector. The desire by the organization to orient and integrate the intern into the culture of the organization (including etiquette, sensitivities, rituals, and relationships) seems very significant to the mentors. This reinforces both the internal strength of companies and sectoral identity, and it was seen as an important impact of funding.

A multi-level impact is very evident in the program. The majority of interns continue to work professionally in the field, which strengthens the sector as a whole. As well, the organizations who mentor appear to be developing a positive concern and interest in this activity, generating more embedded support for leadership in the sector.



What ongoing issues have we identified?

Over the past decade of funding internships, we have noticed a number of issues that persist. No program runs in isolation, and there are ongoing systemic realities that we must acknowledge. Here are some of the questions that we keep asking.

Since the relationship between intern and mentor is key, how can we best assess that all-important “fit”?

The advisors have flagged applications where they felt a good intern was paired with a less than ideal mentor, or vice versa. It's sometimes a challenge to read between the lines of an application to get to what it's really all about—to learn enough about the participants from the information at hand. To make that easier, we have strengthened the requirement for both intern and mentor to speak directly to the committee through the applications. Asking them to explain the relationship, goals, and training plan in their own words has had the effect of “raising the bar” on the level of thinking and clarity that we expect to see, and it has allowed us to gauge, more effectively, the intangibles of commitment, enthusiasm, and each individual's passion for the opportunity.

How do we get the right balance of benefits to organization and intern?

The Foundation tries to balance an organization's legitimate need for staffing against the goals and interests of the intern. We have to ensure that the organization's first priority is not “an extra pair of hands,” but to serve the intern's learning goals. In the best circumstances, these two things are very complementary.

As the program has become more competitive, the growing importance of this balance is very apparent to Program Director Michael Jones. He was the General Manager of The School of Toronto Dance Theatre when the program began and hosted a very successful internship for Alice Toyonaga, who has since become a Director of Programs for Canadian Heritage/Patrimoine canadien (and who served, for a number of years, as an advisor to our program). He is conscious, however, of the manner in which that application was really crafted around the needs of the School as opposed to those of the intern. Given how much interns and mentors have strengthened their proposals over time, he is not sure whether that same application would be approved if it were submitted today.



TERESA VEERKAMP

2012 METCALF INTERN (COSTUME, WARDROBE), THE GRAND THEATRE



The program tends to favour full-time positions in companies, and this makes it hard for potential interns to have, as their mentors, inspirational freelance artists, who rarely have full-time positions in companies. If there were a way for an internship to be broken into segments, with a mentor working at several companies, this would benefit aspiring designers, directors, and choreographers and help them make use of the program.

PHILLIP SILVER

FREELANCE DESIGNER; DEAN EMERITUS, FACULTY OF FINE ARTS, YORK UNIVERSITY
METCALF FOUNDATION PROGRAM ADVISOR (2004-2012)

How can we ensure that both large and small organizations take advantage of their unique strengths to provide learning and experience?

It might seem that a larger organization, with its bigger budgets and specialized staffing, would be the best place for an intern. But a small organization can often provide a broader perspective and more diverse, hands-on opportunities for an intern. Both large and small organizations can provide important training, and the Foundation wants its granting to reflect this. The resources of the organization need to be appropriate for the goals of the intern.

As Michael Jones notes, “This is a tension we like holding, as internships at both large and small organizations can be productive—sometimes in different ways. We usually find that the more specific the internship goals are (for example, skills such as wigmaking or tailoring) the larger the organization needs to be to provide them.” It is important that the resources and capacity of the host organization respond appropriately to the goals of the intern, and we, accordingly, hold organizations to a high standard in the training and work plans submitted with the application. Small company or large, the benefits are greatest where an active commitment exists to an intern’s training needs.

What about the unintended consequences of paying interns?

Grants are given as salary for interns. We wanted to provide a rate of pay that we felt was meaningful, but still appropriate within the sector as a whole. At \$27,500 for a year’s placement, there have been cases where that level of remuneration placed pressure on an organization’s existing salary levels. It is a sad but real state of affairs, especially in small organizations, that it might be possible for the intern to make as much as the senior members of the company.

There is no easy way to resolve this systemic issue. With the exception of one instance, where we were told that salary adjustments to regular staff were made as a result of having an intern, it is impossible to know whether inadvertently challenging the salary structure in this way has had a positive impact over time.

How should we respond to organizations that continue to apply to the program on a regular basis?

Certain organizations have embraced the program and been successful with multiple applications. In some cases, usually in a larger company, an enthusiastic mentor has emerged who is committed to a thoughtful and comprehensive approach to an annual internship position. In these instances, the advisors must ask: Is the opportunity being shaped to the individual needs of each intern? Is the quality of the placement being sustained? Is the organization capable of continuing the internships without the Foundation's support? What happens to the candidates? Is the internship addressing a shortage or meeting a need in the labour force?

One recurrent debate is whether the Foundation should formalize these ongoing relationships in some way. Should we, for example, create a permanent Metcalf internship at an organization which has demonstrated real commitment and effectiveness over multiple placements? And if we did, how would that limit our capacity to support other internships? We have chosen not to do so, preferring to assess each application on its own merits and leaving maximum flexibility for granting in each round.

Why haven't we seen more cooperative applications?

The Foundation hoped to see applications in which two organizations pooled their strengths to offer a more comprehensive experience for an intern. We felt this would help interns and companies in smaller population centres and enable smaller companies to share both the responsibility for an intern and the benefits from having one. While this has happened from time to time, and successfully, we have not seen very many of these partnerships. It may be that asking two or more companies to coordinate their needs, production schedules, and training plans in order to host an intern is one level of complexity too many.

ROXANNE DUNCAN

GENERAL MANAGER, THE THEATRE CENTRE

2006 METCALF INTERN (ADMINISTRATION), VOLCANO AND PEGGY BAKER DANCE PROJECTS





We hoped that the demands of the program on both parties would help to sustain a higher quality experience. The message was that it was not the need of the employer that was of prime importance, but the capacity to teach and give value to the intern. And, over time, a more sophisticated understanding of the program did emerge from the community. Organizations found ways of building internships that were desirable for both them and us and, with some repeat applicants, building it into their thinking and operations.

ROBERT SIRMAN

DIRECTOR AND CEO, THE CANADA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS
METCALF FOUNDATION BOARD MEMBER (2006–PRESENT);
PROGRAM ADVISOR (2001–06)

How is the program being used to address strategic labour market issues?

The sector has used the program to address gaps in skill training. For example, The Grand Theatre set up an internship program to tackle the lack of trained Technical Directors in theatre. New Artistic Directors are typically freelance artists and lack important organizational experience and perspective; there is no formal training program for these individuals as exists for artists or production staff. A Metcalf internship can be used by people aspiring to work as an Artistic Director in order to prepare for this key leadership position.

However, there are many other factors at play in the overall health of the sector. Having been both an intern and a mentor, Lise Ann Johnson, former Artistic Director at the Great Canadian Theatre Company, said, “It’s possible to recognize a skill shortage, but there may also be a job shortage. Will the emergence of trained people help to create these important positions?” A good question, for which we have no answer.

How can we support the sector’s learning agenda?

By 2008, in conjunction with developments in other areas of the Foundation’s work, the subject of management and leadership training was emerging as an important one. Both interns and advisors were enthusiastic about the idea of adding a more formal learning component to the internship experience. We addressed this by adding a second intern meeting each year, as requested by interns, and using these meetings to focus on a specific topic of interest. We have had some success with guest speakers, who can talk about subjects like alternative models for small companies or broadly applicable skills like strategic planning. The cohort of interns at any meeting, however, is diverse in discipline and position. Some of them are just beginning their placements, while others are almost finished. This makes it a challenge to deliver any kind of common or cumulative curriculum.

I didn't want to separate my brain into "artistic" and "administrative"; when I sat down with my mentor, she completely understood. I had been working before the internship, but I was making it up as I went along. When I started my internship, I felt like I had never made so many mistakes in my life! Because so much of my work had to be redone or revised, I felt like I was finally learning.

Without this experience I would not have the career that I have now. The relationships I made over that year have been instrumental in all of my work, and my career moved forward much faster than it would have otherwise.

RUPAL SHAH

PRODUCER, NIGHTSWIMMING AND DVXT THEATRE

2008 METCALF INTERN (PRODUCING), NIGHTSWIMMING AND DVXT THEATRE

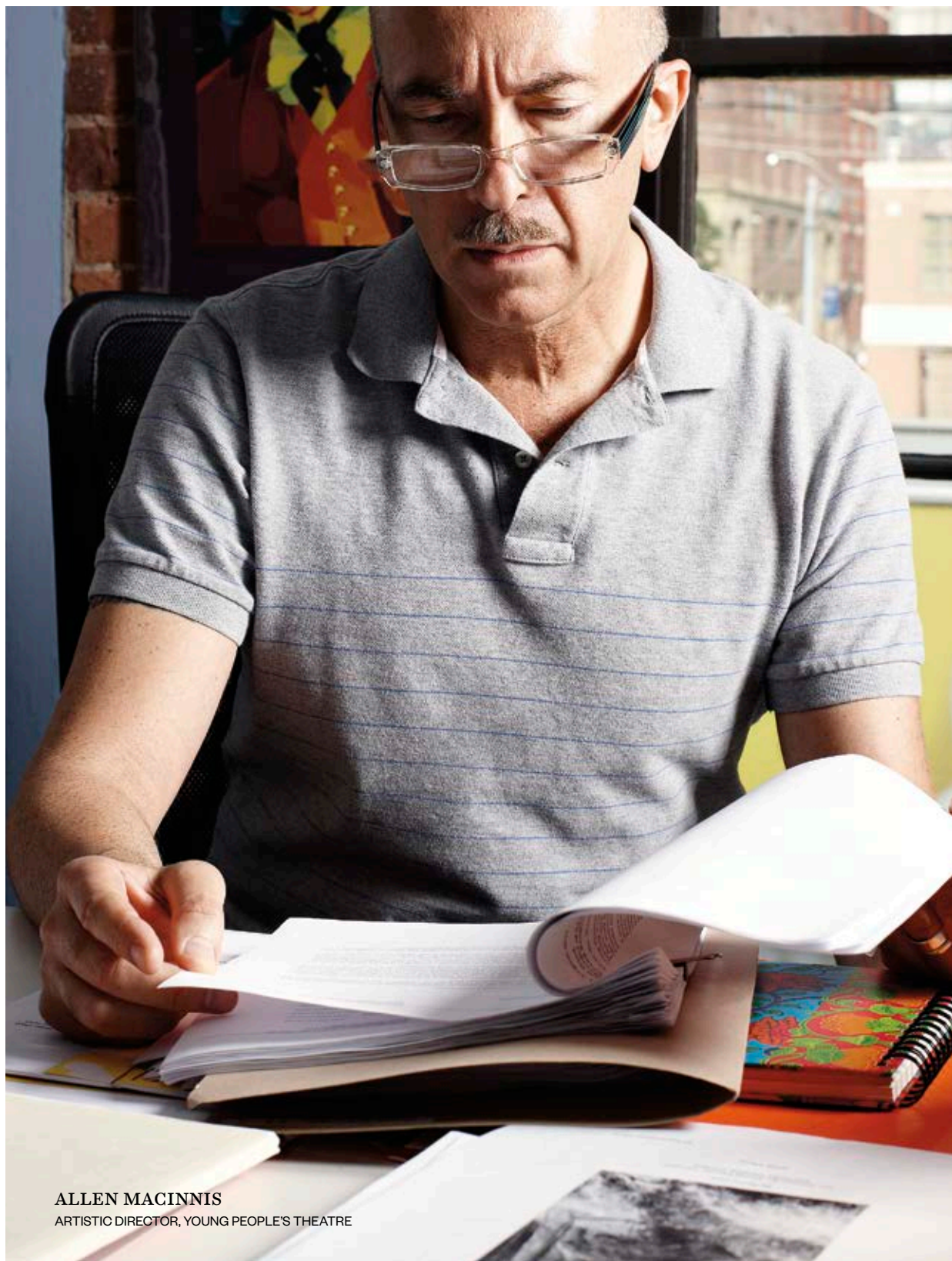
And what about the mentors?

We focused on the needs of interns as we developed the program. Could we enhance the effectiveness of the program by better supporting mentors? Without question, to mentor someone properly requires particular skills and takes an extra effort. Many organizations and their leaders can't, or just won't, take it on. For internship programs to be meaningful, we need to do all we can to support those who will.

We bring interns together regularly, but not mentors. We pay interns, but provide no honorarium to mentors, who are already being paid by their organizations. We encourage professional development opportunities for interns, but have not determined whether we might strengthen and develop the skills of mentors in some way. We are already asking mentors to contribute a good deal of time and energy to the program. We don't know whether they would have the time for, or interest in, an additional component specifically for them. But it is something we could look at more closely.

How can we track former interns through the course of their career?

Keeping track of former interns is a challenge. We are keen to know what happens to them and how their careers develop, but, in a sector with as much mobility as the performing arts, it can be difficult to follow them. We have become more successful in capturing contact information through the application process and keeping it updated than we were, and we have sufficient evidence to indicate that 86% have remained working in the performing arts sector, but this is still a work in progress.



ALLEN MACINNIS
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, YOUNG PEOPLE'S THEATRE

Alexis Buset and Andrea Surich

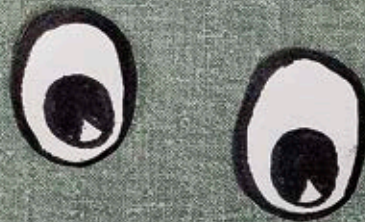
Balancing Supply and Demand

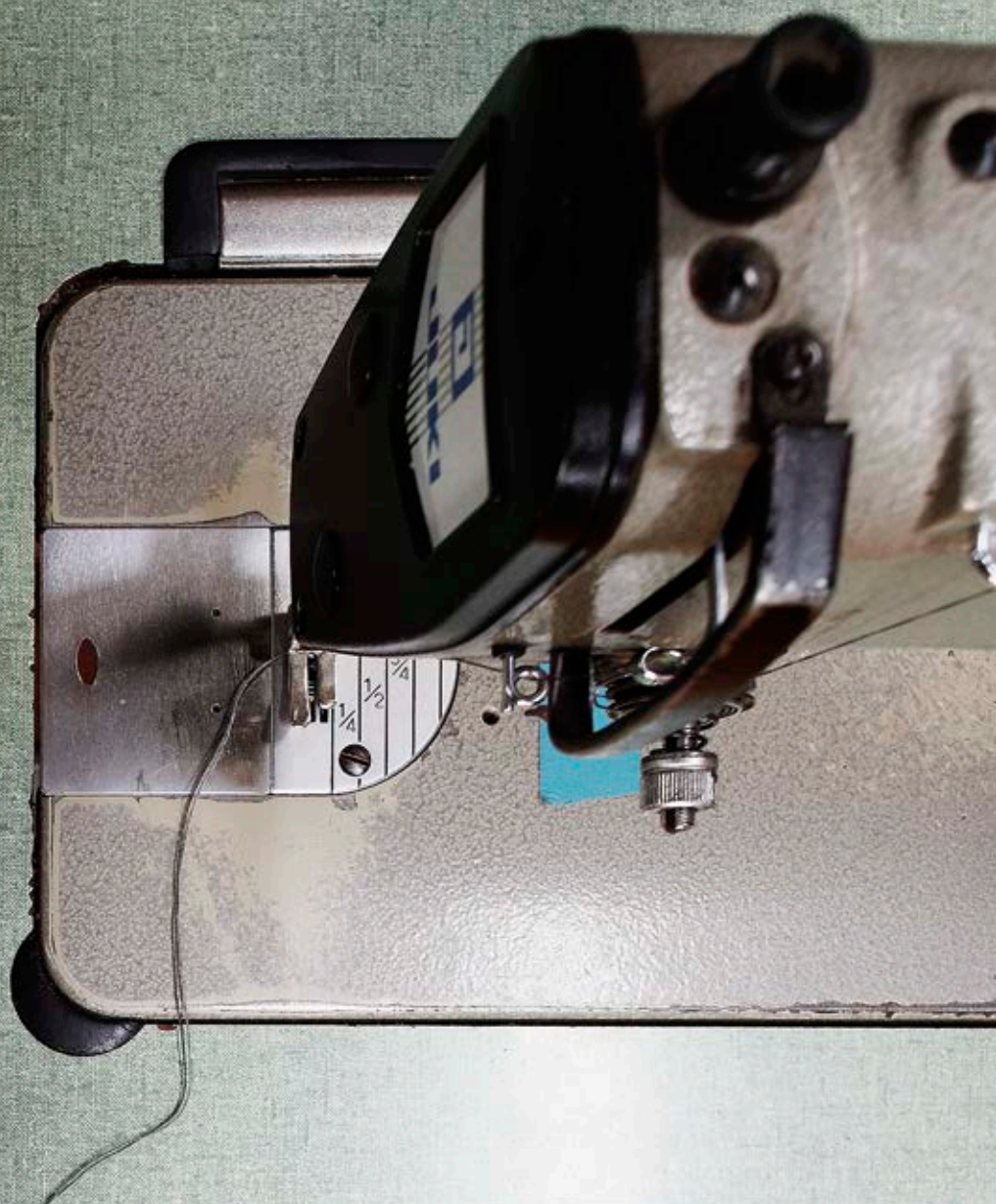
The Grand Theatre in London approached the Foundation to say that there was a chronic shortage of trained and experienced Technical Directors, a key production position in theatre. They wished to address this skills gap through a placement designed to give interns experience in a large regional theatre, with multiple production stages and a unionized workforce. Most importantly, they had a motivated potential mentor in their own Production Manager.

“Schools can’t teach everything. Technology is important, but the theatre is all about face-to-face communication and relationships. The nurturing that good mentoring can do is worth years of school training. Nothing replaces it, or ever has. You can trace my work right back through the years to Sir Henry Irving [the great actor-manager of the Victorian stage], and this type of mentoring sends it forward. It’s tradition and history.”

ANDREA SURICH

PRODUCTION MANAGER, THE GRAND THEATRE





In 2005, after interviewing 16 applicants, Andrea chose Alexis Buset to be the first candidate for the internship. Alexis was a young technician working on a series of contracts with a variety of small companies and festivals. She had the ambition to be a Technical Director, but lacked opportunities for the kind of training she needed.

After her internship, the Grand hired Alexis to be the Technical Director for their next show. In 2006, she went to the Blyth Festival as their Production Manager. She has worked steadily ever since and is now Technical Director at Young People's Theatre.

News travels. For the second year of the program, Andrea received 28 applications. Over several seasons, this successful internship position has indeed created trained Technical Directors. But it has also brought change and insight to the company.

“I’m on my seventh full-time Technical Director intern from Metcalf. It’s the internship program that’s keeping me going! In the beginning, other people at the theatre weren’t very generous, but now there is a broad commitment to training which permeates the company. We feel we’ve become a ‘teaching theatre,’ like a teaching hospital. And now there is a bank of people who can do this work. Five of six former interns are still in the field, working all over. I’m so proud of them.”

ANDREA SURICH

PRODUCTION MANAGER, THE GRAND THEATRE

“It’s great to be connected to the other ‘alumni’ of this program at The Grand Theatre. The internship put me in a great position to move forward. A trail of good contacts led to new work. But I’m still connected to the Grand and to Andrea.”

ALEXIS BUSET

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR, YOUNG PEOPLE'S THEATRE
2005 METCALF INTERN (TECHNICAL DIRECTION), THE GRAND THEATRE





Without the internship, there's no way I could have been in the job I have now, no way. Opera Atelier gave me the confidence to see I could do it. Also, the company was able to make the Production Manager's job full-time after the internship, and it had never been that before. That makes a big difference for us.

EVELYN CAMPBELL

PRODUCTION MANAGER, OPERA ATELIER
2008 METCALF INTERN (PRODUCTION), OPERA ATELIER

How times have changed... or not.

In 2008, the Foundation decided to take another look at the environment for its grantees in the Performing Arts Program. The result was Michael Jones's paper *How We Live Now: A Discussion Paper Regarding Current Challenges in the Performing Arts Sector*.

Between the development of the Performing Arts Program in 1999/2000 and that paper in 2008, the sector had grown considerably, but support from various levels of government had not kept pace. The funding model which had predominated for the past fifty years was under increased pressure. Competition for government grants, private sector income, earned revenue, and audiences was keener than ever. The impact of technology and rapid technological change was everywhere. The workforce was aging and succession was more recognized as an important issue. Recruiting and retaining the next generation, and better reflecting demographic diversity in the workplace, were two very important challenges.

But some of the issues facing performing arts organizations had not changed very much. Eight years after Metcalf's Performing Arts Program was launched, we could see that human resources and professional development remained a priority, situated prominently amid concerns about the overall health of the not-for-profit arts.

It had become more difficult to break into established institutions where senior workers showed no signs of retiring. New companies were unable to access the same levels of stable funding as their predecessors did. As a result, patterns of work were shifting, with more contract work across a broader field and more self-directed work undertaken by freelance contractors.

The 2008 report notes:

Many of the individuals interviewed spoke about the challenges for emerging artists and administrators, particularly during the transition between the end of professional training and the start of a career. Within the category of people emerging into the sector, several survey respondents also spoke directly to the challenges facing independent artists, who are creating companies in order to advance their personal artwork, while subsidizing their artistic work through positions outside of the sector. Entrepreneurial and resourceful, these emerging artists and producers nevertheless face daunting challenges as they take their place in the sector.

The Metcalf internship program has seen these challenges reflected in more applications from mature and established artists who are looking to the program as a way to develop mentoring relationships with senior artists who can guide them—not to find work at other companies—but through the challenge of establishing or running their own independent companies. In this context, the contacts and networking opportunities available in an internship setting can be as important as the specific skills and knowledge gained.

Here's something else that hasn't changed: the Foundation always has more applications than it can fund. Both interns and mentors say that the opportunities provided by internships are even more important in this competitive and rapidly changing environment.

Recent research by the sector's human resource councils has confirmed this ongoing need for internships in the cultural sector. In February 2008, Cultural Careers Council Ontario and Ipsos released *Enriching Our Work in Culture: Professional Development in Ontario's Culture Sector*. Among the recommendations, the report suggested that CCCO should emphasize the need for formal professional development or more structured on-the-job training in organizations.

In its report for the Cultural Human Resources Council, *Cultural HR Study 2010*, the Conference Board of Canada suggested that the sector should:

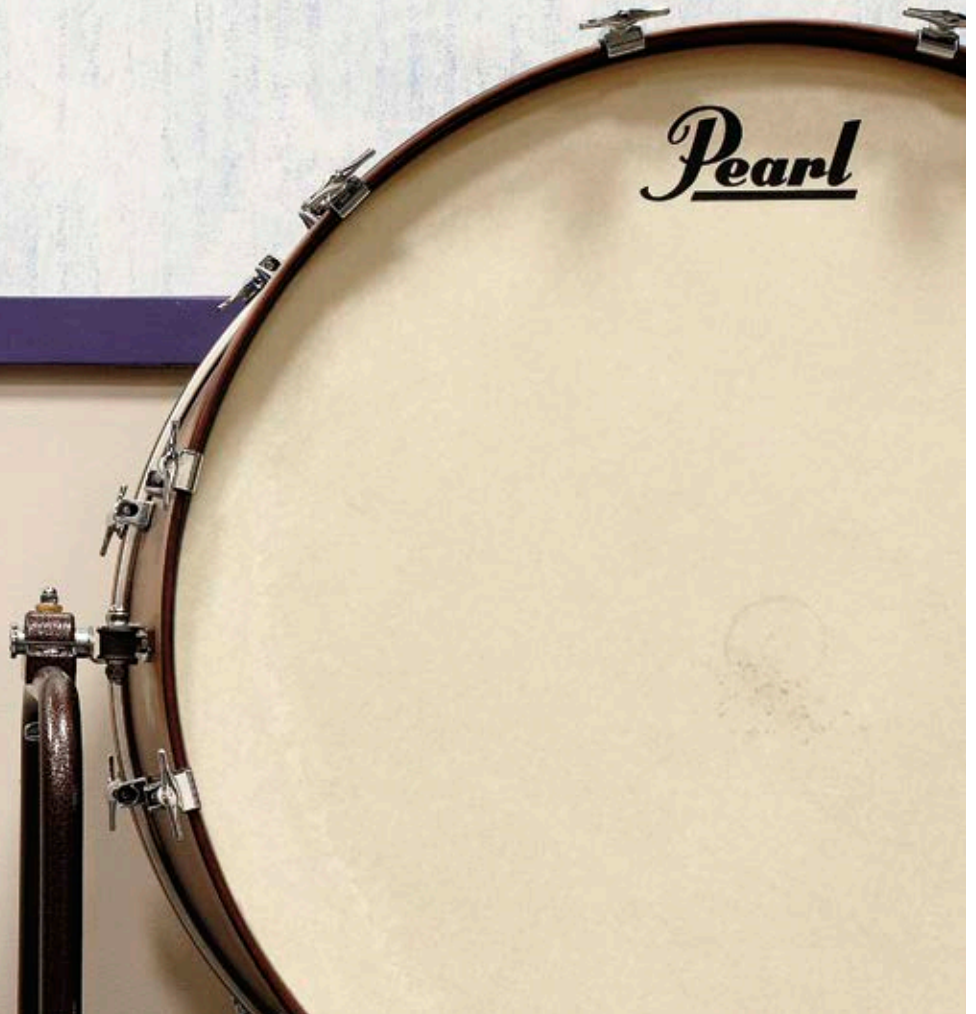
- encourage more recognition for the role of mentorship in succession planning for organizations, career transition for older workers, retention of younger workers in organizations, and skills transfer for artists and technical workers;
- promote and support internship opportunities which bridge the school/work gap; and
- promote and support on-the-job training opportunities.

Internships are a way to introduce a younger and more diverse workforce into the sector. They often bring with them a remarkable facility with new technology. During their placements, they are having an impact on how organizations use technology in art, as well as in marketing, fundraising, and communications. In exchange, interns are given an invaluable introduction to existing knowledge, experience, and networks that they can use right away to move forward in their careers.

We are so pleased to see our former interns making the most of the opportunities that they have received and going on to assume leadership roles in the sector. We have seen changes happen within the culture of the organizations that we support, and we have seen the emergence of mentors who care deeply about having an impact on the next generation of leaders. Having Andrea Surich at The Grand Theatre tell us that the company went from being resistant to their earliest interns into developing a new identity as a “teaching theatre” is truly gratifying. More than ten years after the launch of the program, it is particularly rewarding to see early Metcalf interns become mentors themselves, passing on their knowledge to another group of emerging leaders.

SANDY HOUSTON

PRESIDENT AND CEO, METCALF FOUNDATION





Lily Ling and Paul Sportelli

Pursuing a Dream

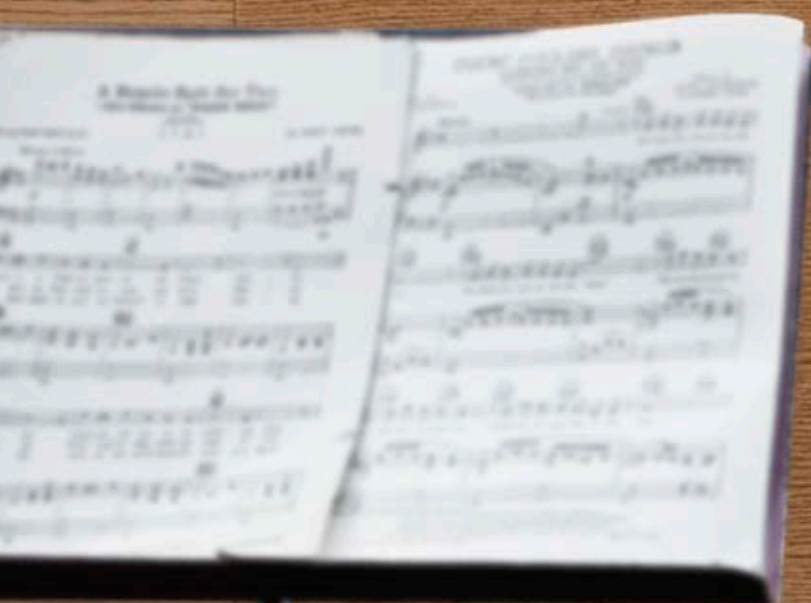
The Shaw Festival has hosted multiple interns, especially in music theatre. Music Director Paul Sportelli works within Shaw's training mandate to make a serious commitment to nurturing talent in his own field.

“There aren't many places where a musical theatre director can get comprehensive training. My job here is so diverse and multifaceted, it's very fulfilling, and I thought it would be great to share this experience with up-and-comers. And the Shaw Festival is a great community in which to learn; it's very supportive.

I learn from the interns, too, and it makes my work richer and more enjoyable. To watch professional respect and recognition come their way is very rewarding. The principles behind the Metcalf program are great, and I love to be able to put them into practice in my field.”

PAUL SPORTELLI

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC, SHAW FESTIVAL



In 2009, Paul met Lily Ling, a talented young musician with a Bachelor of Music in piano performance from the University of Toronto. Lily wanted to perfect her skills as a musical director. She noted that, for the previous nine years, her efforts in this area had been “self-taught and learn-as-you-go.” Despite an impressive variety of educational and theatrical experiences in musical direction and conducting, she lacked thorough, comprehensive training.

Paul felt strongly that Lily was at precisely the right point in her career for this kind of opportunity. They agreed that, in addition to honing the skills she already had, they would focus on rehearsal technique, vocal pedagogy, composition, orchestration and, most importantly, conducting. Lily had taken an introductory conducting class, but the professor was adamant that she use her right hand to hold the baton. As a musical director who had mainly conducted from the piano, she had grown accustomed to using her left hand. Therefore, she was particularly interested in perfecting her conducting skills.

Lily made the most of her internship, which allowed her to “work and learn in a nurturing environment under the guidance of one of the best mentors I have ever had.” But perhaps her most memorable experience was with a baton.

“August 3rd, 2010, I’m sure will remain one of the highlights in my musical career. After several months of preparation, Paul handed over the baton and gave me full reign of the podium. It turns out that I was the first female to conduct a mainstage production in the Festival’s 49-year history! I received so much support from the actors, the orchestra, and especially all the women in the company. It was the most exhilarating experience I have ever had.”

LILY LING

FREELANCE MUSICAL DIRECTOR
2009 METCALF INTERN (MUSIC DIRECTION), SHAW FESTIVAL

Metcalf Arts Interns 2001 through 2012

MICHELLE ALEXANDER	EVELYN CAMPBELL	DEANN deGRUIJTER	KATHERINE GRANGER
SHANE ANDERSON	ALEXANDER CANN	MELINDA DEMPSTER	HILARY GREEN
TANYA APOSTOLIDIS	JENNIFER CAPRARU	AMY DENNIS	MICHAEL GREVES
NINA LEE AQUINO	SHAWNA CASPI	KATHERINE DEVLIN	HEIDI MARIE GUGGI
JENNIFER ARCHIBALD	VANESSA CASSELS	LISA MARIE DI LIBERTO	WAYNE GWILLIM
AVIVA ARMOUR-DSTROFF	MARTORIE CHAN	GUY DOUCETTE	PHILIP HARTWICK
LARA AZZOPARDI	CAROLYN CHOO	COLIN DOYLE	JULIE HASTINGS
SUSAN BALL	SCOTT CHRISTIAN	ALEXANDRA DRAGHICI	SHELLEY HEEBNER
KATRINA BARAN	JULIA CHURCHILL	TODD DUCKWORTH	BETH HELMERS
MARIE-LEOFELE BARLIZO	JENNIFER CIANCA	ROXANNE DUNCAN	MATT HEMMING
ELLEN BAYLEY	CAROLYNE CLARE	FAYE DUPRAS	SHAWN HITCHINS
LAURA BEKS	DARYL CLORAN	AUDREY DWYER	RUTH HOCH
JENNIFER BELIVEAU	JENNIFER COE	SKY FAIRCHILD-WALLER	KATE HODGERT
LIVIA BERIUS	STEPHEN COLELLA	KATE FENTON	KATIE HORRILL
LINDA BESNER	SEAN CORCORAN	JENNIFER FILIPELLI	TODD HOSELTON
NOVA BHATTACHARYA	KATE CORNELL	KARA FORREST	MALAR JANAGAN
SEIKA BOYE	JACQUELINE COSTA	IELLE SEAN FREY	BRYN JENNINGS
ADAM BRAZIER	CAMERON COURT	GIL GARRATT	JASON JESTADT
DIAN MARIE BRIDGE	JORDANA COX	VANYA GARRAWAY	LISE ANN JOHNSON
BRIAN BRITTON	ISIDRA CRUZ	PATRICK GAUTHIER	DENYSE KARN
BRIANA BROWN	KRISTA DALBY	ASHLEY GIBSON	MARK KEETCH
ALEXIS BUSET	JENNIFER DALLAS	GREG GIBSON	AINSLEY KENDRICK
ORENDA CAHILL	MEAGHAN DAVIS	KEVIN GOJMERAC	FIONA KENNEDY
MICHAEL CALDWELL		JESSICA GRAHAM	NANCY KENNY

ERICA KOPYTO
 DAN KUREIC
 MARTINA KUSKA
 DEREK KWAN
 LOUIS LABERGE-CÔTÉ
 HEATHER LANDON
 KEVIN LAU
 LOREE LAWRENCE
 ANA LORENA LEJTA
 STEFAN LENZI
 NATALIE LEUNG
 GILLIAN LEWIS
 LISA LI
 LILY LING
 VICKEE LORIE
 CASSANDRA LUFTSPRING
 SASHA LUMINSKY
 LOKKI MA
 TAMI MACDONALD
 ARBER MAKRI
 GINA MARIN
 MEGAN MCCOY
 ALLEN MCCREATH
 MARK MCGRINDER

JOE MEBRAHTU
 CLEA MINAKER
 KATARZYNA MISZTAŁ
 ALISON MOCK
 TARA MOHAN
 ALAN MOON
 JENN MORGAN
 MICHAEL MORI
 ANGELA MORRA
 LEORA MORRIS
 ADRIENNE NEVILLE
 BONNIENG
 MORGAN NORWICH
 DANIEL NYMAN
 ERIN O'ROURKE
 LISA OTTO
 SARAH OJAMAE
 KAREN OSMOND
 TORI OWEN
 JANINE PATENAUDE
 JUDI PEARL
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 MICHAEL SINCLAIR
 JESSICA SISSON
 D. JEREMY SMITH
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 LAURA WEMYSS
 KRISTI WHITE
 CHARISSA WILCOX
 MARY WOOD
 BARBARA WORTHY
 JUSTINE YIM
 &
 CHRISTINE YU

In 2012, there is a lot more discussion about internships and mentoring, and a much broader understanding of their benefits than there was in 2001.

We all know that there is an immediate impact on the knowledge and networks of the intern, as well as advantages for the host organization. There is also a broader contribution to the sector. Interns will take skills and systems with them, and the field benefits from an infusion of capable and resourceful people. And there is a deeper impact that unfolds over time. By experiencing the benefits they had from nurturing and collaboration, interns are strong agents for creating that environment wherever they work.

We couldn't ask for a better legacy than this.

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