

## 2022 Metcalf Performing Arts Internship Information Session Webinar Presentation Transcript

*Please note: This video webinar recorded on March 1, 2022 was transcribed using auto-transcribing software. The transcript was edited to improve readability and clarity.*

### Goals for Today

**Michael Trent [00:23:39]** The first thing I would like to talk about is provide a little bit of context for the program. Then I'm going to do a very brief overview of the application itself. We have our guidelines, which are fairly thorough on our website. We'll be putting a link to those a little bit later in the webinar, but I just want to touch on some very important key things for folks to think about. And then I want to share the rationale behind the changes that we've instituted this year. And then as I said earlier, we're going to have enough time for you to ask some questions of us. But before we jump into the meat of the matter, I'd just like to share a little bit about the Metcalf Foundation for those of you who perhaps are less familiar with us.

### Metcalf History and Mandate

**Michael Trent [00:24:21]** We are a family foundation. We were founded in 1960 here in Toronto. Our mandate is to work alongside Canadians to improve the health and vibrancy of our communities, our culture and our environment. And we do this through three streams of programming. Our Inclusive Local Economies program focuses on sustainable economic opportunities for low-income people and communities in Toronto. The Environment program works at the intersection of climate, biodiversity, and sustainable neighborhoods. And finally, the Performing Arts program, which I have the great privilege of directing, has two components to it.

The first is we support organizational innovation, and we do that through our multi-year program called Staging Change. And second, we work to support individual leadership, and we do that in two ways. The first is the Johanna Metcalf Performing Arts Prizes. And then, of course, the internships which is the subject matter of our webinar today. Before I jump into the internships, just a little bit of an update on the Johanna's. This is a new award. We are doing our second edition of it this year, and this is an opportunity to celebrate Ontario artists in honor of Metcalf's matriarch, Johanna Metcalf, who unfortunately passed away in 2018. We will be announcing the 15 phenomenal finalists in a few weeks and then celebrating the five winners and their protégés on May 19 at the Art Gallery of Ontario. So please look out for the announcement of those incredible artists. We are so thrilled to be able to acknowledge them, especially in these difficult times, to provide them with a cash award and to raise their profile in the community. It's an exciting program and we're so, so honored to be able to work with these beautiful artists.

### Internship Initiative - Context

**Michael Trent [00:26:18]** So let's jump into the internship program again, the reason why we've gathered here today. A little bit of background: We've been providing the internship program since 2001, and since then we've supported over 330 internships with an investment of just over \$7,000,000. So, this has been significant from the foundation's perspective. We are very proud of this program. It's been hugely successful, and the really cool thing is that we're now seeing a second generation of internships, and by that I mean folks who went through the program now taking leadership roles and are offering internships themselves for the next generation. And if I'm not mistaken, I think there are a couple of instances where there's a third generation of folks who are benefiting from this program.

Why are we doing the internship program? We recognize that people are really at the heart of the sector. The internship is providing a rich learning opportunity for the next generation of leaders by providing knowledge and skills and aptitudes through work experiences and networking opportunities. Our measure of success for this program is the number of better positioned cultural leaders and arts workers who advance the field through gainful and sustainable employment once they've completed their internship. Who really is this program serving? And I think you probably got a sense from that, from what I just said. We designed this program to be in service of the learning goals of the intern exclusively. Many folks take advantage or are able to benefit from an internship program that is able to address the H.R. deficiencies in an arts organization, but that is

## 2022 Performing Arts Internships Webinar Presentation Transcript

not the particular approach or lens for this program. Now, we know that having an extra body inside of your shop can have an amazing impact on your ability to do your work. And we've heard from the host organizations and the interns in the past in our reporting that this has been mostly extremely meaningful experiences for them. We totally understand that, but that's not the lens in which we are making this offering. We want folks to think of this as a really deep learning experience for the intern.

What kind of practices are eligible for this particular program? We are looking at a diversity of practices. Basically, any kind of job within the performing arts except performers. And we don't do performance because we think there are other programs within the ecosystem that meet those needs. We're looking for a diversity of practices, a diversity of disciplines. We traditionally support dance, theater, music, and opera at the foundation through this program. But we also recognize that individuals and arts organizations are working in the spaces in between those siloed disciplines, and we welcome those kinds of organizations who are really trying to push the boundaries around what art is and who they're making it for. All of those, quite a broad diversity of organizations in the performing arts, are eligible to apply. We are looking for a diversity of geography. This is an Ontario-based program. Although we know that the majority of arts workers live and work in Toronto, we want to make this opportunity available to other cities and other artists across the entire province. And finally, we are looking at diversity of gender and racial diversity as well. We have two rounds per year, one in the spring in April and one in October. And just to be clear that our grant is only for paying the intern salary exclusively.

How do we make our decisions on this program? Like many funding bodies, we work with a group of advisors. They're not jurors, so they don't make the final decisions, but they advise us. They read all of the applications and they rank them as high, medium or low. And these are against the assessment criteria that you can read more fully in our guidelines. And what they're essentially responding to is where they're leaning into the most compelling cases for a really profound learning opportunity for the intern. They will rank them as high, medium, or low. And that gives us a really good assessment for each round of applications of how they sit in a comparative lens with each other. Then we invite the advisors in for a conversation, which is always great to sort of hear and unpack some of their thoughts around each of the applications. And then based on the ranking and that conversation, the staff will then make recommendations to the board. So that's just a little bit of background on the program.

### Application Overview

**Michael Trent [00:31:17]** I'd like to now dive into the application overview at this moment. As I said earlier, I'm not going to talk about all of the details within the guidelines. We feel that they're fairly substantive and that we hope that they are clear in terms of what we are asking folks to think about and write about. But the core of what I want folks to think our advisors are looking at is the compelling match, the compelling nature of the match, between the mentor and the intern. This is core to our advisors' assessment and they determine this in three ways.

The first is the statement that the intern and the mentor will each draft. It's very short, it's half a page each. We're asking you to get to the heart of the matter very quickly. Know that elsewhere in the application, there's a resume for the intern and there's also a short bio, so you don't need to give us the sort of history of who you are, but start from this moment. Where are you in your life and what is your vision for your career, your vision for that discipline, the vision for the practice that you're interested in diving into? We want to hear your passion. It's in your voice. Then you also want to give us a sense from the intern's perspective around why this particular person and this host organization are really a compelling place for you to want to spend a considerable amount of time in a learning environment. From the mentor's perspective, our advisors are interested to hear your personal experience or perhaps the experience of your host organization in offering learning opportunities. Set the stage for us in terms of your experience in that regard. But also, we'd love to hear from you why you feel the intern has compelling promise for the sector, not for the organization, but you see them as someone who will have a lot to contribute to the sector in the future.

## 2022 Performing Arts Internships Webinar Presentation Transcript

The second thing that our advisors are looking for as they try to determine the compelling nature of the match is the skill set analysis in the work plan. This is the core piece of the application. The first part, the skill analysis, what we're asking each intern to do, and this is work that they will do on their own to begin with, is with respect to where they are in their lives and the practice that they want to dive into. What are the skills that they seem to have an understanding of or an experience with? We don't predetermine what those skills should be for any particular practice. It's really up to the intern to clearly outline that for us from their perspective. Then we ask them to say, where do you want to go? What are the things that you're really keen to dive into that you want more exposure to or new things that you feel you need to learn in order to improve your ability to be a really strong contributor to the sector? Once that analysis is done, that's when the collaboration happens between the intern and the mentor. And there you want to together design a work plan that's going to close the gap between your current and your desired skill sets. Those two pieces of work, skill set analysis and the work plan is, as I said, the most fundamental part of the application and everything else that we're asking you to write about is in response or in support of that analysis and that work plan.

The third place in the application where our assessors get a lot of information is the video. We've got some tips on our website about how to do that, and I'll mention a few in a second, but I do want to point out a slight change in what we're asking folks to do in their video. The prompt remains the same, which is, from the intern's perspective, what do you hope will change for you as a result of this deep learning experience? So, we want the video to start with the intern first sharing with us what that moment of change is. And then we're inviting the intern and the mentor to have a conversation about the idea that sits underneath that moment of change. You will have had a thousand conversations together as you're leading up to this moment, as you're finding out who each other is. That's the kinds of conversations we want to have a sort of bird's eye view of or a sort of fly on the wall. It's conversational. It's to each other. It's not direct to the camera. It's really giving us a little insight into the energy, the way that the two of you work together. How does the intern articulate with that moment of changes for them? And how does the mentor support that by asking deeper questions, by probing a little bit more? We give you a minute and a half. It used to only be a minute. We've extended that mostly because we realized that folks are doing this, making this video probably remotely. It feels like a short amount of time, but it is a substantive time, and as I say, our advisors love this part of the application. A couple of other tips to think about; at the very beginning, just say who you are and then dive into the prompt and the conversation. Please don't repeat anything necessarily that you've already shared with us in the application. This is a new bit of information or insight that we're looking for through the video, and we hope it's pleasurable. Often, I recommend to folks that they do a couple of these, three or four of them, and then maybe test them with some of their colleagues to see which is the one that really resonates for them. So that's the video. Three things: the statements, the analysis and work plan, and then the video. The other thing I'd just like to point to in the application is around the external professional development. Sometimes it's kind of misunderstood what we're trying to get at here, and there's two ways to think of it. These are opportunities, first of all, that exist completely outside of the container of the host organization. And we found over the years that there are two instances in which this kind of outside work can be really useful to the intern. One - if there are gaps in the host organizations or the mentor's ability to meet the learning goals of the intern. And the second- if there's a desire to perhaps amplify some of the learning. So, gaps and amplification. We're not asking you to write a lot about this, but we do want to see the thoughtfulness behind it and the specificity of what that external professional development opportunity or opportunities might be. And again, our advisors are going to look at how this is in conversation with the skill set analysis and the work plan gaps and amplification. I won't go into any greater depth about the application. Again, the guidelines, we think, are fairly thorough, but those are the two key things that I wanted to share with you.

### Changes to 2022 Application

**Michael Trent [00:38:25]** I'd like to now move on to the changes that we're doing this year. So why are we changing things? We are often and quite regularly in conversation with everyone who participates in this program, so our advisors, our interns, and our mentors. And over the time we try to be responsive to those insights that we gain from all of the players inside of the program. So every three or four years, we increase the salary for the interns. And this, of course, is in response

## 2022 Performing Arts Internships Webinar Presentation Transcript

to the increased cost of living that we are all experiencing. Specifically, within this COVID moment, we are finding for those folks, of course, who live in the city of Toronto and other communities across the province that the cost of living has really, really spiked over the last while. The second reason that we're instituting these changes is that we have a hunch. We have a hunch that a shorter duration or length of the internship will allow the interns to focus more deeply on the learning and get them back out into the field sooner. So those are the reasons why we're instituting these changes this year. There are five changes that we're putting in place, and I'll just name these and then I'll expand on them a little bit more. The first, as I mentioned earlier, is that we are increasing the salary for the intern. The second is that we are decreasing the maximum duration of the internship. And if you take those two issues together, those two changes together result in the third change, which is that the maximum value of the grant is also decreasing. Now some of you may go "Wait a second - is Metcalf pulling away from their investment?" Absolutely not. And again, when I go through the numbers in effect, this will hopefully be clear for you. The fourth change that we're making is that we're increasing the number of grants that we're offering in a given year. And finally, the fifth change is that this obviously results in a larger overall budget for the initiative. So those are the five changes. Let's look at these through the numbers themselves.

**Michael Trent** [00:40:36] From a salary perspective, you'll notice in the application that we provide the sort of maximum amount for that. Now, it's not a yearly internship, but it's a 10-month internship. But we also allow folks to frame their learning experience on a monthly basis, on a weekly basis, and in some cases, an hourly basis depending on how the internship has been structured. But you'll notice from the chart here that from the current to the new, there's been an increase in all of those levels as a result of the increased salary overall. It's not an enormous increase, but we hope it's one that will have a meaningful impact on the interns. The second one is, as I mentioned earlier, the duration. Currently, or in 2021 and before, it was a 12-month duration. We're now moving it to a maximum 10-month duration. The result of those two things mean that the grant value is changing, and it used to be \$32,000, but it is now \$30,000. Again, I want to be very clear here that we're not reducing the amount of money that is going into the intern's pocket, but we are just reducing the amount of time over which that amount of money is being put into the intern's pocket. So if you take that \$30,000, which is over 10 months and you put it over a 12-month period, it would actually be \$360,000. So again, I just want to be really clear that we are increasing the salary for the internship experience. Finally, the number of grants per year; we used to offer 10, we are now increasing that to 12. So, more opportunities, and I can share with you, and I think many of you probably know, that this is an extremely competitive program. We receive very, very, very strong applications in every single round, and I've been involved in this program since I've taken on this role at Metcalf the last six years and for seven years prior to that while I was an advisor to the program. We receive way more beautiful and strong applications than we're able to fund. So in response to that, we're upping the numbers this year, and what that results in is that increased overall budget, as I mentioned, from \$320,000 to \$360,000 a year.