



## **CONSEIL DES ARTS DE MONTRÉAL** **PROPOSAL FOR A BROADER MISSION**

### **Introduction**

Fuelled by a continuing passion for the arts and for Montreal, the Conseil des arts de Montréal, during the course of its 50 years of existence, has contributed to the social and economic development of this Quebec metropolis by actively supporting its artistic and cultural organizations. In tune with its community, attentive to its needs, but also able to maintain a metropolitan perspective and remain abreast of cultural challenges, the Conseil des arts has always believed in creators and the dissemination of their work.

The preparation of *Montréal métropole culturelle – Rendez-vous novembre 2007* led to a debate on the role and place of culture in Montreal and the promotion of Montreal as a cultural metropolis. In the wake of these discussions, Culture Montréal proposed a restructuring of cultural governance in Montreal with its project *Agence montréalaise de développement des arts et de la culture* (AMDAC) that the City of Montreal greeted favourably.

This proposal has arrived at a very opportune time and the Conseil des arts de Montréal endorses it fully. It shares the diagnosis made by Culture Montréal on the importance of giving Montreal a coherent tool to develop the arts and culture across Montreal. However, instead of creating a new structure, the Conseil des arts suggests taking advantage of what is already in place by giving the Conseil a broader mission in order to make it a stronger organization, better able to meet everyone's expectations.

The Conseil des arts de Montréal is certainly a key player. Given the proper resources, it could better serve both creators, who are the source of artistic activities, and citizens, who benefit from these activities, and thereby help Montreal to position itself as a cultural metropolis.

### **The Strengths of the Conseil des arts de Montréal**

For 50 years, the Conseil des arts has played a major role in the development of arts and culture in Montreal. Until now, its mandate has confined it to a supporting role for creators. Seen as a hybrid structure, bridging the gap between the municipal government and the cultural sector, the Conseil has never really been independent nor had the specific mandate of representing the cultural sector, which has somewhat restricted its field of action. Nonetheless, despite its limited resources, it has developed strengths which, today, have made it an essential participant, an active player on the front lines.

- Its raison d'être is the **development of the arts**, thanks to the presence, among its members, of practitioners who have an inclusive and committed vision and to the concrete actions that it has implemented over the years.
- It possesses **skills and expertise** (practical and profound knowledge of the creation-production-dissemination chain, including mediation and audience-development).
- It is a **proximity service**: established in downtown Montreal, it boasts a team of cultural advisors and managers who maintain strong links with the arts sector and who are present and attentive to the needs of their organizations, and are therefore greatly appreciated.
- It has a **light organizational structure**: the Conseil is a flexible and dynamic organization, relying on a small number of motivated and conscientious employees. Its operations are efficient and transparent, its programmes and evaluation mechanisms are simple, and grant applications are treated quickly. Its operating expenses, including rent and maintenance costs, account for only 12.5% of its budget.
- It has a **metropolitan perspective**, currently serving the entire island of Montreal, i.e. the 19 boroughs of the City of Montreal and the 15 reconstituted cities, as it has since its founding in 1956.
- It has a **deep knowledge** of the arts organizations and their needs, as well as a close relationship with municipal presentation venues. For many years, it has acted as a consultant and has forged strong links with the arts sector, as shown by the spontaneous gestures of support displayed these past few weeks.
- It has a **culture of partnership** in its genes, an essential element in its wish to represent the sector. It has created bonds with the arts and culture, business, education, municipal, and government sectors.

The Conseil's strengths and these specific elements are assets upon which the Conseil wishes to build its new mission.

**The Conseil des arts has everything it needs to exercise unifying leadership and to develop, in cooperation with the sector's various stakeholders, a concerted strategy that will make Montreal a true cultural metropolis. In order to accomplish this, it must rely on its strengths, broaden its mission, increase its visibility and its communications, develop new courses of action, obtain more financial and human resources, and establish a larger and more influential board of directors whose governance will be representative of the artistic, business, and socio-economic sectors.**

It is clear that the Conseil des arts de Montréal does not currently have all of the necessary human resources to undertake this broader mandate, but these "gaps in expertise" will, of course, soon be filled.

Finally, to mark this transformation, the Conseil des arts de Montréal wishes to take on a new, distinctive name: **ARTS MONTRÉAL**. Serving the entire island of Montreal, the

mandate of **ARTS MONTRÉAL** should eventually be expanded to include the entire Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal (CMM).

### **Basic Principles of the Conseil's Broadened Mission**

The mission of the Conseil des arts must remain centered on the development of the city's arts and culture. However, it must embrace a larger vision of Montreal's development, integrating the arts and culture as growth factors.

**The core business of the Conseil des arts de Montréal is supporting Montreal's artistic organizations. Furthermore, a broadened mission implies that the Conseil would become resolutely committed in the development and promotion of arts and culture, in partnership with all of the sector's stakeholders.**

The Conseil already supports and recognizes excellence in professional artistic creation, production, and dissemination, by providing financial and technical support mechanisms, advice and dialogue, research and development.

But it also wants to become an organization that promotes arts and culture, by displaying all-encompassing leadership within the cultural and socio-economic sectors, and by taking part in debates and projects that concern the artistic community.

This broadened mission of the Conseil rests on a few fundamental principles:

- **Montreal, Cultural Metropolis is defined by its creativity and daring**
- **Support for creation is at the heart of municipal cultural action**
- **The new Conseil des arts must reflect the image of Montreal, Cultural Metropolis, i.e., a creative and bold structure that is also light and efficient**
- **It must encompass all of the links of the cultural chain**
- **It must have the financial means to match its ambitions**
- **The City's activities, services, operations, and programmes must all be "contaminated" by the arts and culture**

### **Five Courses of Action**

The Conseil would therefore conduct its activities according to the following five courses of action:

- 1. Become an organization devoted to the promotion of arts and culture**
- 2. Strengthen its financial and technical support to organizations**
- 3. Develop a culture of dissemination and promote audience development**
- 4. Increase partnerships and manage agreements**
- 5. Develop alternate sources of funding**

It is understood that these courses of action are in sync with the major concerns identified by the City in its Cultural Development Policy: the democratization of culture, support for the arts and culture, and culture's impact on the living environment of Montreals.

### 1. **Become an organization devoted to the promotion of arts and culture**

The Conseil must make every effort to promote the knowledge and appreciation of the arts and to stimulate the public's interest in the arts, in order to ensure the sustainable development of the arts and culture.

The Conseil des arts de Montréal has a global perspective on artistic practices and is able to identify complementarities between organizations. **With increased communications and research funding, it can best fulfill its role as a unifier and a catalyst and show more solidarity with the artistic and cultural community.** The creation of the Presidents' Forum, the steps taken to promote ethnocultural diversity in the arts, and professional integration for emerging artists are a few examples of this.

The Conseil can also launch campaigns to highlight the arts and culture in cooperation with organizations that promote Montreal's development (Tourisme Montréal, Culture Montréal, Montréal International, Société d'habitation et de développement de Montréal, Société de transport de Montréal, etc.).

The Conseil will play the role of monitor and consultant for municipal political authorities; it will need to develop mechanisms to measure and evaluate the socio-economic impact of Montreal's artistic and cultural development.

### 2. **Strengthen its financial and technical support to organizations**

In order to undertake this action, the Conseil des arts must integrate all of the grant programmes currently under the Direction du développement culturel de la Ville de Montréal, especially those pertaining to organizations that are already funded by the Conseil.

Therefore, from now on, the Conseil must also assume the responsibility of supporting major festivals and events, as well as activities related to artistic heritage, such as public art, municipal collections, and artists' workshops. It must also manage all of the awards of excellence currently given by the City. As for the design, architecture, and circus arts sectors, where the Conseil is currently not or only slightly involved, we must foresee a greater presence with appropriate resources.

This will result in **one stop service**, meaning: simplified procedures for the organizations, better and more coherent dialogue surrounding the actions undertaken, and economies of scale. Such a procedure will, in large part, address the situation of cacophony and duplications criticized by Culture Montréal.

The Conseil must also develop tools to complement the grants. For instance, concrete, transversal initiatives that support the cultural sector, such as mentoring

and business volunteering, or that promote the development of skills and networking, such as programmes to encourage emerging artists and the inclusion of ethnocultural artists. Added to these activities is the support that the Conseil provides to dance, theatre, and music companies by offering them rehearsal studios, and many other initiatives inspired by best practices here and abroad. The Conseil can therefore support the organizations in several ways.

### **3. Develop a culture of dissemination and promote audience development**

The democratization of arts and culture in Montreal is a major issue: we must increase the participation of all citizens in the city's artistic and cultural life. To do so, the Conseil must resolutely pursue its support of dissemination, which is currently the weak link in the artistic chain. The Cultural Development Policy for Ville de Montréal has already pointed out the main problems with the current system in terms of dissemination, mediation, and audience development.

As part of its touring programme, the Conseil has already forged close bonds with municipal venues, the City's network and the ADICIM (a network that include the reconstituted cities), as well as with the Ministère de l'Éducation. **It is the only municipal stakeholder that has such a wealth of experience and such a wide network of partners in the field.**

We must, however, expand this action and examine the advantages of opening this programme up to private venues along with the public presentation network. Thus, the Conseil could reinforce the important role it plays in audience development, particularly young audiences and those from ethnocultural communities.

The Conseil must increase its support of Montreal presenters while promoting, in consultation with provincial and federal authorities, the reputation of our companies at all levels: local, national, and international. Companies that tour abroad are ambassadors for Montreal as a cultural metropolis. Reciprocity must also be facilitated: the Conseil will administer workshop and residency programmes for artists and companies from abroad, as well as those from Quebec's regions and Canada. It is also important to pursue the cultural cooperation agreements that have already been signed with the cities and develop more of them.

As for libraries, maisons de la culture, and other municipal presentation venues – which play a key role in the democratization of culture – the Conseil must maintain close ties with this network, in terms of dialogue, consulting expertise, technical support, mediation programmes, etc.

### **4. Increase partnerships and manage agreements**

The encounters and exchanges between the various partners that are preparing *Rendez-vous Novembre 2007* have highlighted certain deficiencies that currently exist between them in terms of dialogue and communication. These deficiencies are fundamentally harmful to the development of *Montréal, Cultural Metropolis*. It becomes therefore clear that a mechanism or **a permanent forum for dialogue** must be put into place to strengthen the political and administrative ties between

Montreal and the other levels of government, in order to develop a concerted strategy for metropolitan intervention.

Furthermore, the Conseil des arts de Montréal must also create **bridges** with various partners. For instance; Culture Montréal and the essential role it plays in lobbying for and promoting the arts and culture; professional associations that represent all of the players in the sector; the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal, which can mobilize the corporate sector around the arts and culture cause; the teaching milieu, indispensable in developing young audiences; the island's boroughs and municipalities that have a particular responsibility; the governments in Quebec City and Ottawa whose actions in Montreal would benefit from being more concerted; and, of course, the City of Montreal. These ties with the various municipal services, thanks primarily to the presence of an "integration agent," are particularly important to ensure the strategic coherence of municipal action and allow Montreal to go in a new cultural direction.

The Conseil des arts also wishes to become a partner with the agreements signed between the various levels of government (such as, among others, the MCCQ-Ville agreement and the Forum des équipements culturels), and manage the sections of these agreements that pertain to its mission.

Lastly, the Conseil could become a conduit for dialogue and representation for sectors in which the municipal administration is hardly involved. For instance, the cultural industries sector: film, television, publishing, song and record industry, set design, etc. These are sectors in which Montreal creators are internationally renowned, and it would be to Montreal's benefit to promote them.

## **5. Increase public funding and develop other sources of funding**

If we wish to make Montreal a true cultural metropolis, the City and the other levels of government must increase public funding of the arts in Montreal. The Bachand Report recommended that the Conseil's budget be set at \$20 million. Within the context of a broader mission for the Conseil, this amount must be substantially increased and indexed; at the very least, the Conseil's budget should be increased in proportion to the City's budget.

The Commission métropolitaine de Montréal (CMM) must also play its part. Studies have shown that over a quarter of all spectators who attend major events and patronize the city's larger institutions (Jazz Festival, Francofolies, OSM, Opéra de Montréal, TNM, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, etc.) come from the island of Montreal's northern and southern suburbs. It is high time that the CMM participate equally in funding these large companies via the Conseil des arts de Montréal, as recommended in 2005 by the Commission municipale sur le développement culturel.

Furthermore, the Conseil can and must seek private funding, without, obviously, competing with the organizations to which it provides grants. Rather, it must develop strategies to help organizations generate more revenue from corporations, foundations, and individuals. Thus it has forged a partnership with the Board of

Trade of Metropolitan Montreal and is aiming, in the medium term, to convince the private sector in both Montreal and Quebec to make a greater investment in the arts.

Among the workable ideas are the following:

- collaborate with the Foundation of Greater Montreal to manage the funds earmarked for the arts and culture;
- invite the private sector to participate in its touring programme and special projects through sponsorships;
- implement funding and fiscal support programmes, such as fiscal partnerships, accompanied by training and skill-development programmes in the area of fund-raising;
- establish recognition awards associated to corporations, such as the Les Femmeuses/Pratt & Whitney Canada prize.

### **Governance of the new Conseil**

The new Conseil des arts must have a new board of directors, chaired by a non-elected individual appointed by the Agglomeration Council. This board could be made up of 25 members, of which a majority must come from the arts sector, i.e.:

- 1 chair
- 13 artists or cultural administrators
- 7 people from socio-economic sectors
- 4 municipal representatives (elected and executive directors)

Artists or cultural administrators would be appointed in consultation with the cultural sector and include the chairs of the evaluation committees responsible for reviewing grant applications<sup>1</sup>. They could also include a representative from arts schools and a representative from the presentation sector.

Representatives from the socio-economic sectors would be named in consultation with the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal.

The presence of elected officials and senior officials on the Conseil's board would ensure an organic link between the City and the Conseil des arts. One of these elected officials must be a member of the City of Montreal's executive committee and another could come from the rest of the agglomeration or, eventually, the CMM.

### **Conditions for success**

For this change to take place successfully and without obstacles, we need to put a few winning conditions into place. Here are a few of these conditions:

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<sup>1</sup> Following the example of the Toronto Arts Council, members of these evaluation committees are peers and can be appointed for a period of three years, renewable only once.

- **Leadership** must come from the top. It is essential that the **mayor of Montreal**, who is also president of the CMM, become personally committed to this process. This means, among other things, that he/she must mandate representatives to the new organization who have the necessary weight to defend the arts and culture loudly and forcefully.
- The Conseil's **legal autonomy** must be clearly recognized to better ensure its independence from public powers, to be actively present in public debate, and to have the legitimacy that it requires to fulfill its new role. The importance of maintaining an arm's length relationship between the municipal administration and its Conseil des arts cannot be stressed enough.
- The Conseil des arts de Montréal, which possesses the skills, expertise, dynamism, and, above all, the confidence of the sector, must be the **project manager** of its transformation in a **spirit of constructive collaboration and dialogue** between the concerned partners (City, agglomeration, CMM, etc.)
- We must ensure a very high level of **transparency** in the process and **adhesion** from the sector and all of its partners.
- We must proceed in **stages** and not force changes unduly.
- The integration of the City's programmes must be done with the mutual **respect** of skills and people. It should be noted that the Conseil's employees are not unionized, are not employed by the City, and do not have the same benefits as City employees.
- We must maintain a **structure that is light and accessible** and avoid the pitfalls of bureaucracy.
- The investment of **new money** is indispensable: it is not enough to simply "shuffle the deck." The increased budget must be **indexed**.

## Conclusion

Following the example of Barcelona, as well as New York, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and Toronto, Montreal must rely more on its creative strengths in the arts and culture. And the Conseil des arts de Montréal – with the necessary resources, support, and autonomy – can certainly become a solid structure that will promote cooperation between the players and ensure a smoother integration between the arts and business. This way, it will serve both the creators and citizens, uniting everyone's efforts in order to create a strong cultural metropolis.

This proposal aims to be a positive contribution to the discussion on cultural governance in Montreal, by banking on the transformation and evolution of an existing organization that is in tune with its community and is well respected. Broadening the mission of the Conseil, developing new courses of action, consolidating municipal budgetary envelopes tied to culture, putting in place a renewed board of directors, are all steps in the right direction.

The Conseil des arts de Montreal is convinced today that a strong entity is necessary and that it can serve, thanks to its acquired knowledge and experience, in building the foundation of this new entity.

## A FEW NUMBERS\* ON THE CONSEIL DES ARTS DE MONTRÉAL

Year of founding: 1956

Contribution from the Montreal agglomeration: \$10.2 million

Percentage of Montreal's budget: 0.25%

Number of employees: 14.6 p/y

Number of funded organizations: 281

Grant programme: \$7,501,000

Touring programme: \$1,128,593

Other programmes: \$279,069

Number of events presented within  
*Conseil des arts de Montréal en tournée*: 496

26% of the activities presented in municipal venues are  
part of *Conseil des arts de Montréal en tournée*

36% of the fees paid to artistic organizations that are  
presented at municipal venues come from the Conseil

Number of companies or independent artists renting our rehearsal studios: 438

Rental revenue: \$178,691

\*These figures are for 2006.