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Federal cuts killed 175 international tours

Lost funding cost groups three times as much in revenue, CINARS says

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THE GAZETTE

The Conférence internationale des arts de la scène (CINARS) has released a report about the impact the 2008 federal arts-funding cuts have had on arts organizations across the country.

Two of the programs abolished by the government were PromArt and Trade Routes. The combined \$5.4 million of funding distributed by these two programs helped promote Canadian artists abroad and helped artists defray international travel costs.

The data gathered from companies and organizations that participated in the survey reveal that because of the loss of the \$5.4 million in funding, 175 international

tours were cancelled, representing \$15.8 million in lost revenue.

Companies and artists have been scrambling ever since to find the funding needed to get them to their international destinations in order to honour touring contracts.

The survey was sent to 291 organizations across Canada – 160 in Quebec and 131 in the rest of Canada. The rate of response was 20 per cent.

"It's not a surprise," CINARS CEO Alain Paré said about the results. "It only confirms what we said would happen when the cuts were announced two years ago.

"We want the public to know just how much these cuts have devastated us, especially in the other Canadian provinces. They don't have

the same level of provincial support that we have in Quebec."

Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal general director Alain Dancyger was able to attend yesterday's news conference because the company's annual November tour of the United States was cancelled.

Dancyger said last season's tour of the Middle East was only able to go ahead because of the kindness of private sponsors and because the company received a portion of the \$3 million in emergency arts funding the provincial government kicked in following the federal cuts.

"I spent 40 days in Cairo begging Egyptian business people to give us money to pay the rest of the costs," Dancyger said. "I was so embarrassed."

Now Dancyger is looking for the money needed to get the company to China in 2011. Federal Liberal MP for

Honoré-Mercier Pablo Rodriguez attended the news conference at Usine C and said the federal Liberal party would reinstate the funding if it wins the next election.

The federal government was not represented at the news conference.

CINARS's seven-day international trade show for the performing arts begins Nov. 15 with a performance of Les Grands' production of Leonce and Lena, choreographed by Christian Spuck and inspired by the Georg Büchner political satire.

CINARS gathers artists from 40 countries for one week of performances and activities.

The public has access to 4,000 free passes to CINARS events through www.lavitrine.com.

For CINARS program details, visit www.cinars.org.

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