

Executive Directors Report 2011 AGM

2010 was a year that BCTC focused on enriching and deepening our relationships. Relationships with our members, our board of directors, our communities throughout the province and with our sector colleagues in BC and beyond.

Shortly after a successful Pacific Contact I was back in the office in Nelson proud to co-host the Kootenay Arts Summit with our partner 2010 Legacies Now, Arts. BCTC had co-hosted an arts summit in Smithers the previous September and having a second opportunity was very rewarding. Community arts organizations, presenters, artists and civic leaders from around the Columbia Basin (south east corner of BC) joined in on 2 ½ days of workshops and professional development, roundtable discussion, performances and art openings. Jerry Yoshitomi, John Mclachlan, Sandra Thomson and Alison Markin were outstanding workshop leaders. In addition to his day long workshop on audience development, Jerry gave a keynote address at lunch talking about how local government can further boost and embrace the arts in their communities.

BCTC board chair Paul Gravett facilitated an afternoon discussion and networking session for participants allowing them to express how the Summit inspired them, rejuvenated their art practice, created and expanded their networks and gave them new tools for working in the arts. Thanks Paul and thanks to the Columbia Kootenay Cultural Alliance and the Columbia Basin Trust for their financial support that allowed delegates funds for travel and accommodation.

In May BCTC jumped into COBB expanding our online training, building wish lists online and facilitating conference calls around the province. This work culminated in 8 tours blocked in the 2010-11 season. Still a little clunky, the online booking system was improved over the summer making it more user friendly (for both users and administration) and in the fall it really took off thanks to Shannon Lythgoe who really took the reins as co-ordinator providing information, communication and facilitating bookings with better flow and more speed. This is resulting in many more tours block-booked for 2011-12. It's still a service very much in development and progressing. One of the greatest benefits has been the relationship building and communication with presenters, artists and agents.

Spring and summer is a time for regrouping - with project staff and Board of BCTC to review, plan and implement showcases, upgrade the website, receive and award Community Presenter Assistance, and plan Pacific Contact. I am so very fortunate to work with an experienced and talented group of people (as Paul mentions in his report and who you will find in the Pacific Contact Program) Kara, Linda, George, John, Sheryl and Shannon. Thank you all for your dedication, support and good humour year-round.

One very great opportunity for BCTC is our participation in our national network. In June, Chair Paul Gravett travelled to Ottawa to participate in our national network meeting allowing me to stay home for my son's high school graduation. Congrats to CAPACOA and Erin Benjamin, executive director and Canadian Heritage national office for their vision to expand the meetings to include networks of network organizations. This is resulting in a broader understanding of the scope of arts networks and is allowing us to build relationships and grow. These meetings now not only allow us to share information across regions but also across disciplines and with other sector organizations.

Staying on the topic of building relationships across disciplines and within our sector, was the ongoing meeting of Provincial Arts Service organizations. These meetings began around advocacy issues due to BC Arts Council cuts and cuts to gaming funding. One of the benefits of meeting is getting to know and understand the challenges of our colleagues in other disciplines and the industry side of things in music, visual arts and publishing. For example by getting to know Bob D'eith and Music BC I got to understand a little more about how the industry side of music industry works and what very great challenges they were also facing.

My interest in learning more about the industry side of music led me to do two new things. The first was to take up an invitation to participate on a panel by the Vancouver Island Music Industry Conference, a small fledging music conference in Courtney BC. It was a wonderful event for emerging artists and experienced industry professionals and artists to network. What a treat to be in the same room with the likes of Bill Henderson of Chilliwack and Dan Hill sharing their knowledge. I would highly recommend all our colleagues in music who don't know about this event to check out the event on the website plan to attend.

The second was to attend the Western Canada Music Awards Break Out West conference in Kelowna at the end of October. It is an event in which many of our BC and western Canadian music artists perform and take home awards. Congrats to Dan Mangan and many other BC artists.

Kelowna was a very good host to what for was an exhausting weekend of club hopping to hear music, lots of networking with music industry people from around the world and an excellent awards show. I met so many people, got to talk about what BCTC does and really learned a lot about the music industry. It was great to see our member Rotary Centre For The Arts and Kelowna Community Theatre host the major events. Very well done. This year break out west moves north to Whitehorse, Yukon.

On my way to Courtney for the music conference at the end of June I was able to attend the Vancouver Arts Summit in Surrey organized by the Alliance for Arts & Culture. BCTC is a long-standing member of the Alliance and it was very good to

meet up with old Vancouver colleagues and to make new friends and to hear first-hand about the success, challenges and concerns of the urban arts communities.

Back to the fall of 2010 and BCTC work. As all of you know only too well, the fall is a kind of new year for our sector. Seasons begin, tours launch and its Contact conference season for all our colleagues across Canada and the US. My fall conference schedule included attendance at Arts Northwest in Bellevue Washington and CAPACOA in Ottawa. It had been almost 6 years since attending Arts Northwest and it was a pleasure to meet up and network with our American colleagues. I'd like to thank Karen Hanan for inviting me.

I would also like to thank Erin Benjamin and her staff for an outstanding CAPACOA conference last November. CAPACOA has moved into a new era offering members and in particular network organizations many new opportunities for networking, professional development and sector support. I would like to thank Frédéric Julien for organizing meetings and professional development not only at CAPACOA but year-round for our network group and congratulate him on the creation of the Presenters Toolkit which you can all find on the CAPACOA website.

BCTC also launched a new Webinar series in the fall of 2010. Sandra Thomson gave 2 webinars – Fundraising/Friendraising and Creating Effective Boards and Jerry Yoshitomi followed up in January with Sell More Tickets, Raise More Money.

I can say that we were thrilled (and surprised) with the uptake for all of them – over 30 participants. We were also surprised with the relative ease and use of technology and how much you can really share in one hour. We look forward to continuing these again this year.

In early September the Board of BCTC met for its annual meeting. This year instead of travelling out to hold a regional meeting with members, BCTC board and staff held a two ½ day retreat to review its strategic plan and take the opportunity to invite officers of BCTC's two major funding bodies the BC Arts Council and Heritage Canada to meet each other and share knowledge and information. This was very worthwhile thing to do. I would like to thank Gillian Wood, Acting Executive Director of the BC Arts Council and Pierre Stolte and Deborah Meyers of Canadian Heritage for taking time to meet with us.

Sandra Thomson facilitated the board retreat and brought her amazing skills to help the board and staff review our plan, board responsibilities; create an action plan for the year and a succession plan for BCTC. I can say with confidence that BCTC remains on track and moving forward with one vision and one voice. Thanks to Sandra Thomson for bringing her skills to help the BC Touring Council.

I am now in my 10th year with BCTC and still loving what I do. While day to day work in any organization can at times feel tedious and in the arts sometime feel futile, I have to say that for me the greatest rewards come from working with and serving great people who are passionate about what they do.

This AGM marks the end of service (for now) of some great people – members of BCTC that have been serving you to help lead your organization and support your staff. I am very sad to say goodbye to Wendy, Neil, Heidi, Margot and Paul. I want to thank them all for their 6 years of service.

I especially want to thank Paul Gravett for his service as Board Chair of BCTC. It has been a great honour to work with you Paul, to feel your constant support for me, your fellow board members and for BCTC to ensure we are moving forward with a strong vision and value for all our members. I am going to miss you so much.

I'm also looking forward to working with all the board members who remain and welcome new members coming onto the board. We promise all of you that we will work on your behalf to make sure that we work to ensure that touring and presenting in British Columbia remains alive and well.

Respectfully submitted
Joanna Maratta
Executive Director, BC Touring Council