



GUELPH
JAZZ
FESTIVAL



guelph
fab5.ca



A Manual for Festival Collaboration

January 2017

Contents

Acknowledgements	3	Phases of the Co-presentation Process	27
Who We Are.....	4	Manage Risks, Big and Small.....	28
Guelph: the Context	5	Contracts.....	29
Why Co-Present and Co-Produce?	10	Fees and Budget	30
Sharing Resources: People and Information	10	Communication.....	32
Sharing Resources: Materials.....	11	Partner Communication.....	33
Developing Audiences	12	Artist Communication	34
Economic Impact	13	Board Communication	35
Intrinsic Impact: Engagement of Citizens	15	What We Learned.....	36
Unique Arts Events Come from Partnership and Pairings	17	1. Do Your Research	36
Values and Strategies	19	2. Keep an Open Mind.....	36
Guelph Fab 5 Core Values	19	3. Remember the Rules.....	37
Guelph Fab 5 Key Strategies	19	4. Avoid Two-Timing	37
Types of Co-Presentation.....	20	5. Watch Your Step	38
Principles and Practices.....	21	6. Make Ticket Purchasing Easy.....	38
Trends that Favour Co-presentations and Co-productions	23	7. Sharing Sponsors Is a Nice Idea – in Theory	39
Why is Collaboration Suddenly So Popular?	23	8. Once You’ve Got the Hang of It, Widen Your Net.....	39
The Importance of Trust	25	9. Fund the Future	40
Start with Small Steps.....	26	10. Lead by Leaning	40
		Highlights from Our Co-presentations	41
		Works Cited.....	45
		Appendix A.....	46
		Trillium Guelph Fab 5 Collaborative Agreement	46



Mix Mix Dance Collective performs at Hillside Festival's main stage in 2014
Photo: Teigan Baker

Acknowledgements

The Guelph Fab 5 would like to thank the Ontario Trillium Foundation for supporting us on a three-year adventure of learning and discovery. This funding has assisted the five festivals in producing a variety of innovative, culturally diverse, and educational co-productions. With this manual, we are excited to share with a wider public what we learned and what we recommend for artistic co-presentations.

We would also like to thank our partners, Guelph Tourism and the Downtown Guelph Business Association, who have partnered with our collective since 2011. Their partnership has been instrumental in increasing our exposure, as both generators of artistic production (as the Fab 5) and as stakeholders in the destination development of the City of Guelph's tourism attractions.

Who We Are

We are five festivals who came together because we have in common the presentation of contemporary, cutting-edge art in and around the city of Guelph.

Guelph Dance Festival (May/June) Established in 1998, Guelph Dance presents an eclectic blend of cutting-edge and experimental works performed On the Stage, In the Park, and On the Street.

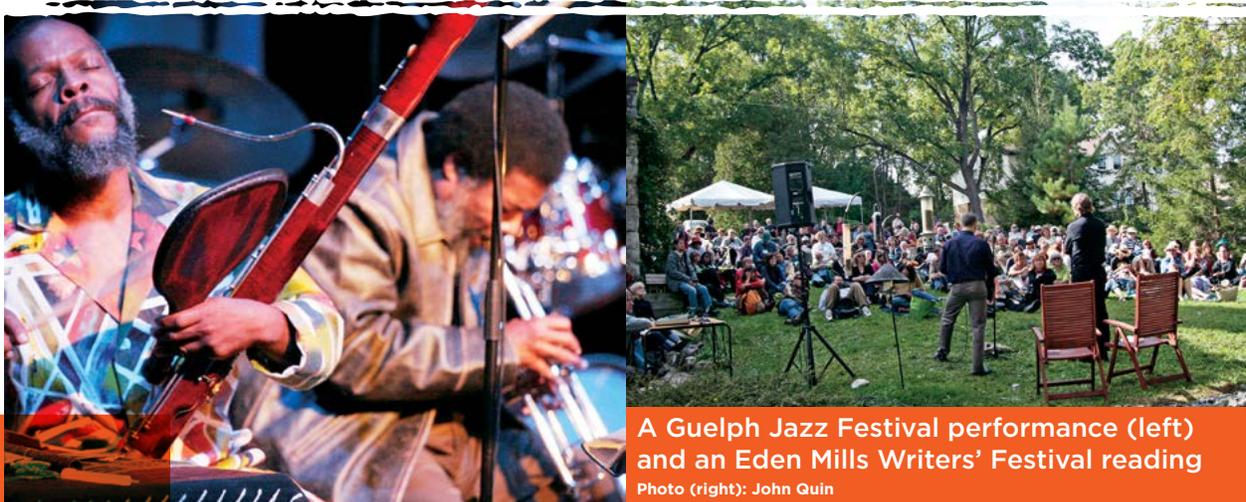
Hillside Festival (February & July) Started in 1984, this organization runs two festivals and year-round activities focused on indie, aboriginal and world music, drumming, dance, food and workshops.

Guelph Jazz Festival (September) Begun in 1994, this festival presents world-class innovative jazz with an accent on creative improvised music.

Eden Mills Writers' Festival (September) Since 1988, this festival presents acclaimed and emerging writers in an idyllic riverbank setting.

Guelph Film Festival (November) Established in 1984, this festival showcases issue-focused documentary films with a global perspective.

Each festival offers at least three full days of programming spanning all four seasons, from February to November.



A Guelph Jazz Festival performance (left) and an Eden Mills Writers' Festival reading
Photo (right): John Quin

Guelph: the Context

Guelph (pop. 121,688) is not the most obvious city in Canada to partake in a cultural co-presentation experiment. It does not have the population density of nearby centres such as Toronto (2,615,000), Hamilton (519,949), Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo (477,160) and London (366,150). But in many ways, its arts scene rivals that of Hamilton, Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo and London for its intensity, persistence, and longevity. While these other larger city centres have arts programming, they boast fewer festivals, particularly specialized festivals that program the work of one particular kind of art — such as contemporary dance, topical film documentaries about environmental or social justice issues, or improvisational jazz. Guelph is peculiar in its concentration of specialized festivals, its concentration of knowledgeable people with arts and culture expertise, and its seemingly endless supply of people who have event-planning chutzpah.

This concentration of cultural production interest and know-how may be a natural product of Guelph's history as a meeting place of peoples. The Attawandaron were the first people to live in the area, drawn to the confluence of two important



A 2010 performance by Floating Seed at Guelph Dance Festival (left) and a Guelph Film Festival advertisement.

Photo (left): Megan Verhey

“Guelph is well known for valuing creativity, community, inclusiveness, and collaboration. The Fab 5 shine as an example of those values at work, and are integral to making Guelph a great creative city.”

Patti Broughton
Executive Director,
Guelph Arts Council

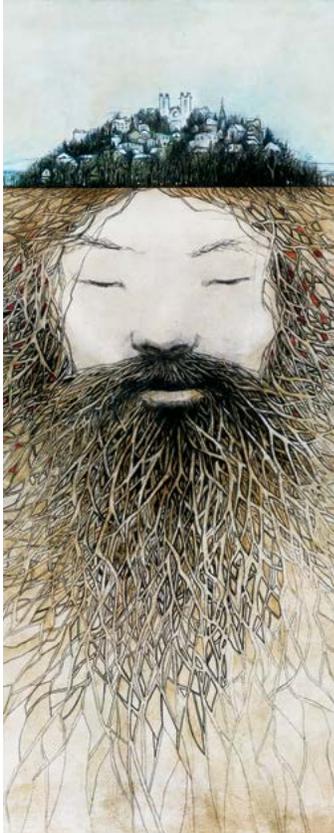
rivers, the Eramosa and Speed, and the fairly rich agricultural land of the region. The Attawandaron were also known as the “Neutrals” by Europeans in the seventeenth century because they occupied a neutral political position between the warring Huron-Wendat and Six Nations peoples. The European settlers who followed were not well known for their political activism either. The superintendent of the Canada Company, John Galt, who designed the city’s first urban plan, was, in fact, a Scottish novelist. And Guelph became a city of music as soon as it had a sizeable population. The Bell Piano and Organ Factory was established in 1864; the Guelph City Band started up in 1878; and the Guelph Music Society was established in 1899. Guelph also had a Royal Opera House, established in 1894, and produced one of the world’s most-celebrated operatic tenors: Edward Johnson, who lived from 1878–1959. He managed the Metropolitan Opera in New York City from 1935 to 1950. These historical details point to a tendency toward development of arts and culture as a key identifying feature of our city from very early on.

It is interesting to note within this context that Guelph has become best known as well for its innovations in agriculture and veterinary medicine. Established in 1874, the Ontario Agricultural College (OAC) is a founding college of the University of Guelph and is recognized as Canada’s largest and most renowned agricultural college. Ontario Veterinary College is the oldest vet school in Canada (and only one in Ontario). It is ranked first in Canada and fourth in the world for veterinary medicine in QS World University Rankings, 2015.

The nurturing component of these disciplines — farming and veterinary medicine — with their roots in providing food for people and care for animals has also found expression in the environmentalism and food politics of some of the festivals. The Guelph Film Festival showcases many documentaries on challenging land-stewardship and water-management issues around the world. The Eden Mills Writers’ Festival regularly presents writers who are famous for their food politics (e.g., Michael Pollan) and stories about animals and human-animal relationships (e.g., Andre Alexis’s *Fifteen Dogs*). The Hillside Festival has strong roots in environmentalism, the organic food movement and social activism, having created a green festival long before it was trend-setting. Hence, there are some obvious connections between the sciences and the arts in

our city that help our festivals feel like community celebrations not just festivities in honour of a particular art form. Further, the Guelph Jazz Festival is intertwined with the University of Guelph, both with its contemporary music program as well as with its International Institute for Critical Studies in Improvisation (IICSI), which is directed by the founder and artistic director of the Jazz Festival, Ajay Heble. Every year, the Guelph Jazz Festival holds a symposium at and with the University of Guelph. Scholars from Canada and the U.S. present papers and attend concerts, giving both the City and the University a profile and a reason to celebrate.

All of the Fab 5 festivals are connected to University departments in some way or another, to the local school board, local venues (from performing arts venues to bars), local suppliers (posters to beer), and other not-for-profit organizations, such as the Guelph-Wellington Volunteer Centre, 10C, and Guelph Arts Council. The largest employers in Guelph are Linamar (auto parts manufacturing), the University of Guelph and the Upper Grand District School Board. Linamar helps fund the successful Linamar for the Performing Arts program at the city of Guelph's arts venue, the River Run Centre, which has, over the past 16 years, given 15,000 children in grades 1 through 8 free access to professional arts presentations on stage at the River Run. This is the signature program for school children in Guelph, solidifying Linamar's reputation as a community-minded organization that is progressive and appreciative of the link between the arts and innovation. The presence of the Linamar program makes it easier for the Guelph Fab 5 to reach out to youth and young families because attendance at a seated arts event has become commonplace rather than intimidating or rare. Further, the students in this program are exposed to professional rather than amateur artists and they are exposed to dance, music, and theatre. The performances they see during the day as part of their school curriculum are frequently repeated at night before a more general public. Hence, the good opinion a child has of a performance may have a ripple effect on the ticket sales and audience development for a piece that is being showcased in our city. The Guelph Fab 5 does not, then, operate in a silo or backwater. Guelph citizens remain interested in and quite active on the arts scene and always have been. The three main employers have strong ties and supportive roles to play with the local arts festivals.



The Hillside Inside 2017 artwork shows the city of Guelph as only the tip of a metaphorical social and cultural complex root system.

Art: Ryan Price

Some Guelph Fab 5 festivals have a school presence through workshops and all have programming for youth. This is key to our plans for refreshing our audiences and ensuring continued demand for our festivals. Partnering with the local school boards (two English and two French) has been generally quite easy because our not-for-profit mandates dovetail nicely with theirs. In addition, the strain schools are under to develop special programs and to pay for them can be eased through partnerships with festivals that can run a program teaching students how to write a song, choreograph a dance, write a poem, or create a short film. Some festivals have separate funding for these initiatives, which eases the burden on schools. Many schools do not have the expertise in a particular arts discipline and so appreciate the injection of knowledge and passion into the classroom.

Some of the schools are situated in underserved neighbourhoods where the struggle to keep food on the table takes priority over arts and culture participation. Hence, the children in these schools often get exposed to performing arts only via the Linamar program and any workshops the festivals may run in the schools. There are large, growing neighbourhoods in Guelph whose residents commute to work in nearby Milton (42 km away), Mississauga (71k m away), Toronto (100 km away) , or Kitchener-Waterloo (30 km away). They do not spend time coming into the downtown to partake of the arts at the festivals or the River Run Centre because they are busy working, commuting and managing their households. Suburban stretches of homes in the south, west and east ends of Guelph come complete with commercial areas for grocery stores, banks, pharmacies and libraries, making treks into the city centre unnecessary if not pointless. It has become important, therefore, for the Fab 5 and other organizations to reach out directly into these neighbourhoods, looking for venues that will accommodate our arts and opportunities to reach people who may not have heard of us.

Though it has an attractive, vibrant arts scene and though it has a beautiful downtown core of historic buildings and churches, Guelph does not come to mind as a tourist destination when one imagines where visitors might go in southwestern Ontario. It does not have a distinguishing natural feature such as a mountain, waterfall, or unusual hiking or cycling trail. The Speed

and Eramosa rivers meet in Guelph and later pour into the Grand River together, but they do so quietly, without dangerous rapids, deep canyons or dangerous precipices. Guelph does not have the lure of Niagara Falls or Lake Huron's beaches. It is also without the cozy charm of Elora (23 km away), whose smaller size and concentration of historic buildings right by a gorge call to mind a Currier and Ives greeting card. It does not have the focus on a single art that is the distinction of Stratford, Ontario (75 km away), famous for its theatre festival and its picturesque beauty (that even includes the iconic swans swimming on the Avon River). And though it has a farmers' market and thriving agricultural industry, it does not have the lure of St. Jacob's (32 km away), with its Mennonite markets and culture, its retail focus on the original work of Mennonite artisans, its interpretation centre focused on Mennonite culture, the presence of the wide Conestogo River and the Millrace Trail that runs alongside it, forming part of the Trans Canada Trail.

What does Guelph have, then? It has a lovely historic downtown, a farmer's market, a reputable University, decent sporting venues, and a lively arts scene. It also has an identity crisis. For these features define many communities in Ontario and across Canada. It was with the recognition that Guelph's defining attributes were mirrored in many other cities and that it had not really sung the praises of its arts heritage and arts scene that the City began to partner with the Guelph Fab 5 to accent its status as a festival city. Since we began this promotional partnership in 2008, more festivals have sprung up in Guelph: Kazoo Festival; Guelph Fringe Festival; Guelph Comedy Festival; Spur Guelph Festival; 2 Rivers Festival; ArtsEverywhere Festival, and more. Thus, as we write this manual, we are preparing to open the borders of the Guelph Fab 5 to welcome in newer festivals in our partnership model and to rename ourselves to reflect our increasing numbers.

**weekend immersions
in mind-blowing art**

Guelph Dance Festival
May 30–June 2, 2013
Tickets on sale now
guelphdance.ca

Hillside Festival
July 26–28, 2013
Tickets on sale May 4
hillsidefestival.ca

Guelph Jazz Festival
September 4–8, 2013

Eden Mills Writers' Festival
September 15, 2013

Festival of Moving Media
November 7–10, 2013

better weekend ing.ca | guelph fab5.ca | visit Guelph | downtown Guelph

PHOTO OF 60S COLLECTIVE: CHRIS RANDLE

A 2013 print ad for Guelph Fab 5.

Why Co-Present and Co-Produce?

The Fab 5 partnership initiative is important for artistic, philosophical and economic reasons.

Sharing Resources: People and Information

It is no secret among event-planners that our work is stressful. In fact, Career Cast lists it as the fifth most stressful occupation after (1) enlisted military personnel; (2) firefighter; (3) airline pilot; and (4) police officer (*Forbes* 2016). The irreversible deadlines, the demanding and too-numerous stakeholders, the impossible budgets: these facets of the event-planner's work make for adrenalin-mad work periods of intense concentration that generally rule out time for coffee with colleagues. Even if arts organizations wanted to partner with others, there is little

“Collaborative marketing isn’t just a natural and effective way to share resources.... it’s a contemporary, powerful strategy that entrenches the value of multiple experiences and reinforces the true cultural significance of a community. Guelph’s Fab 5 project is inspiring others to do the same, and helping to lead arts organizations into their own future.”

Erin Benjamin
Executive Director,
Music Canada Live

time to do the fieldwork, to build the trust, and to develop the project ideas. In the Fab 5 model, the defining of goals is a shared process and thus the application of resources to the goal’s achievement is easier. One festival may have a savvy communications specialist on staff who can help promote the Fab 5 via social media or offer tips to other festivals about how they can best contribute to online promotion. Another festival may have a terrific technical production manager who can help us plan out the costs of a co-presentation. When the goal of foregrounding the Fab 5 name is common to all festivals, the contribution of information and assistance flows effortlessly. Further, we noticed as we advanced in our co-presentation model that festivals that were initially somewhat reluctant sharers had gradually become supporters of the other arts festivals, wishing every success on them and helping them to achieve the same. Familiarity breeds support, not contempt.

Sharing Resources: Materials

First, resources are not distributed equally among like organizations and their existence will depend on the festival’s age, its financial stability, its possession of space for offices and storage, and the peculiar demands of its art form. So, for instance, Hillside and the Guelph Jazz Festival will likely have mic stands; the Eden Mills Writers’ Festival will have podiums; the Dance Festival will have portable flooring, coloured lights and tablecloths; the Guelph Film Festival will have a portable screen. Under normal circumstances, these items are loaned out by a festival to other organizations if there is trust: trust that the item will be used properly and returned without damage. The sharing of resources always has trust as its springboard. One of the reasons so many arts organizations work in isolation and do not share materials and information is because they do not have time to get to know each other and thus view each other as competitors for scarce resources—not just materials, but grants and sponsors, as well. The reigning sentiment in this scenario is, “why make it easier for a competitor?” In the Fab 5 model, co-presentation builds the trust that makes the sharing of resources a given.

Developing Audiences

By its very nature, a co-presentation draws on at least two audiences. And, generally, that's one more than any event usually draws. Though the Fab 5 festivals do share a small audience of people who attend all or most of our festivals, when we started to work together, our aim was to expand our individual festival audiences by attracting people from an ally audience. At the time, we had been spurred on by early 2007–08 statistical reports about cultural crossovers, reports that culminated in deeper investigations conducted by Hill Strategies Research Inc. In a report entitled “Factors in Canadians’ Art Attendance” (2010, 2012), the lead researcher noted that “[o]ne of the key conclusions of the report is that many cultural activities have an influence on attendance rates at other activities above and beyond demographic factors. In fact, the analysis in the report shows that cultural experiences and exposure appear to be more important factors in arts attendance than demographic factors.” This has profound implications for audience building in the arts, and we were quick to seize on the notion that marketing efforts should be targeted toward attendees at activities that are strongly correlated with attendance at another type of arts activity. If “cultural experiences and exposure” might be more important factors in arts attendance than most demographic factors (age, gender, income, education, geography), then there is an arts-interested public that transcends demographic analysis. As Inga Petri affirms, “the more someone attends performances, the more they will attend” (*The Value of Presenting*, 2013). Any arts organization would be wise to recognize that instead of advertising in traditional ways (by, for instance, speaking only to your dance or film enthusiasts or going after the entrepreneurial sector) the research suggests that targeting the audiences at others’ festivals would reap attendance rewards. It was with these hopes in mind that we began co-presenting together. In the first year (2011) that we attempted these co-presentations, our audiences grew quite dramatically:

- **the Eden Mills Writers’ Festival grew by 74%**
- **the Guelph Dance Festival grew by 69%**
- **the Guelph Film Festival grew by 32%**
- **and the Guelph Jazz Festival grew by 21%**



“For me, the Guelph Fab 5 represents what happens when leaders work together and support each other. The whole community learns, grows and aspires alongside them. The Guelph Fab5 is community building at its core.”

Stacey Dunnigan
Supervisor Tourism
and Farmers' Market,
Cultural Affairs
and Tourism,
City of Guelph

These rates reflect not only the increases in the gate attendance at the individual festivals but also the increased exposure they gained by presenting their artwork in front of other audiences at other festival events. This necessarily means that the partnering festivals are presenting at times of the year they would not ordinarily be showcasing anything. And it means that those presentations require a different mindset on the part of the artistic director. Instead of programming for their usual audience of enthusiasts, artistic directors were now programming for an audience that has come for another art form, not merely theirs. So, programming choices were often quite different, influenced by factors such as the potential allure, potential educative quality, potential impact, and the potential harmony/disharmony with the art form that the host festival was showcasing.

Economic Impact

Clearly, with such expanded audience attendance and with such superb opportunities for collaborative marketing, there are economic benefits in the way of both reduced costs for the allied festivals and increased revenues from attendance expansion.

✿ **Growth of destination:** In particular, our partnership signalled to our City that our reputation as cutting-edge arts festivals had been conflated with the City's reputation such that the promotion of the Fab 5 as an alliance that spanned all seasons was a promotion that effectively branded the city as an unusual arts and culture destination. Thus, the tourism department of our municipality promoted us through advertisements in national newspapers and through banners that were both erected in hotels and hung from city streetlights to announce who and what lives here. The City also connected our campaign with a "Taste Real" campaign that promoted the area's local farm-fresh produce, its farms and farmers, and its advanced agricultural practices. This had the effect of grounding the Fab 5 in an aspect of our region's life for which we had become well known.

The City's reputation as a festival city has grown since we began our partnership. In fact, it has attracted more people to the City who have, in turn, set up their own festivals or arts organizations. David Earle, the award-winning choreographer, moved to Guelph expressly because he thought it had a well-developed dance



A 2014 print ad for Guelph Fab 5.

and arts scene that would receive his work well. He set up his own small business teaching classes and developed a company in Guelph. The Guelph Fringe Festival and the Guelph Comedy Festival were recently launched in Guelph by people who were not from Guelph. These were people who were not tied to any particular place in Canada, but chose the city because of its festival scene.

- ✦ **Engagement of businesses:** the Downtown Guelph Business Association (DGBA) has, like the City of Guelph, a vested interest in having people visit the downtown core where there are over 450 businesses, including clothing stores and restaurants, dance studios, film screening venues, bookstores and music shops. The Fab 5 were supported by the DGBA through their entire journey, from its earliest development of an identity through to its use of quirky downtown venues and sophisticated marketing campaigns. The DGBA supported the creation of downtown streetlight

banners and helped promote the Fab 5 events that used downtown venues or encouraged traffic through the core through social media mentions and the free rental of a prime downtown display board for a large poster. The economic impact of this engagement with businesses through our arts programming is just now being formally studied by IPSOS-Reid in conjunction with Regional Tourism Organization 4 and the Chamber of Commerce. Previous statistics about economic impact were based on the number of people the Fab 5 brings to Guelph from outside the City and the number of people (Guelphites included) it drives into local businesses through dining, shopping, parking, accommodation and transportation. Estimates based on our combined audience of approximately 38,000 people show that we bring on average between \$8,550,000 and \$12,730,000 in spending to our City.

Intrinsic Impact: Engagement of Citizens

When the people of our city and beyond who attended any of the Fab 5 festivals were surveyed, we measured not only the economic value of their engagement in our programming but also the intrinsic impact it has. This is not commonly evaluated and yet it provides a clear lens through which we may see people's motives for attending arts events. The results suggest that people who come to a Fab 5 festival are highly captivated (75%) and intellectually stimulated (75%) by what they experience. Sixty-six per cent reported that the experience resonated with them emotionally, while 61% reported that the experience gave them a greater appreciation of the art form and artist. Fully 60% of people surveyed said they felt the Fab 5 experience connected them to the community more strongly.

These results are borne out in national studies, as well, revealing that several indicators of health and well-being are strongly connected to attendance at arts events. In other words, the benefits to the individual are clear—intellectual development and aesthetic enrichment—but it has not always been understood that participation in the arts is not only an indication of a community's health, it is a vital contributor to it. A stimulated and engaged citizenry contributes to the building of a healthy community. *The Arts and Individual Well-Being in Canada* makes the case:

“I rarely attend dances, perhaps the occasional ballet, and do not know anything about dance. I had absolutely no preconceived notion of what to expect. I was shaken by these dances, on a deep emotional level, and moved to tears at times. It was spellbinding, enthralling, and deeply moving emotionally. I can only thank the people involved with bringing this performance to Guelph and all the people involved with the dancing. Simply amazing ... The dances were very personal. They reflected some of my own personal experiences, people I have known, and some intimate moments with patients in my professional life as a nurse. I brought my adult daughter with me and was so pleased to have been able to share this special night with her.”

Survey responses gathered by Cheryl Ewing, Value and Benefits Report, Toronto: CCI - Ontario Presenting Network (2008)

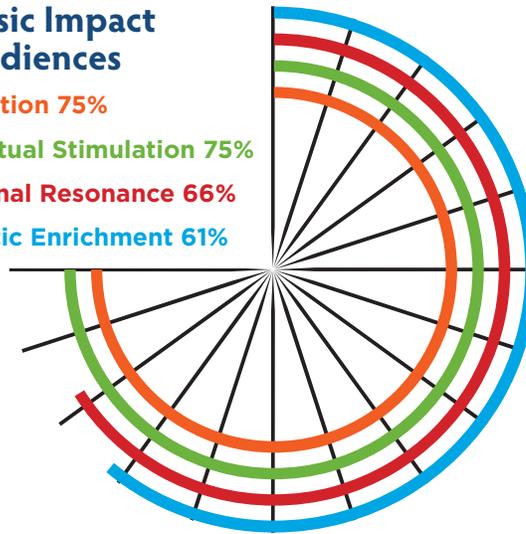
Intrinsic Impact on Audiences

Captivation 75%

Intellectual Stimulation 75%

Emotional Resonance 66%

Aesthetic Enrichment 61%



- Attendance at cultural festivals is strongly associated with volunteering and better health. It is also associated with having done a favour for a neighbour in the past month, better mental health, and feeling less trapped in a daily routine and strong satisfaction with life.
- Festival goers are twice as likely as non-attendees to have volunteered in the past year and 25% more likely to report very strong satisfaction with life. (Hill Strategies, *The Arts and Individual Well-Being in Canada 2010, 2013*).

It stands to reason that if people enjoy the stimulation that comes from exposure to another art form, the co-presenting partnership model will help facilitate community well-being by encouraging year-round participation in the arts. Ranked very high among survey respondents was the opportunity Fab 5 co-presentations offer to “discover something new.” This curiosity and openness to experience was complemented by the impulse to mingle that the performances awaken. Forty-four per cent of attendees report purposely using performances as an opportunity to socialize.

These findings contribute important data affirming that individual motivations for attendance produce important benefits that translate to the community and societal level. The co-presenting strategy offers not only a chance for an individual to learn something new, develop new awareness, and to be engaged in unexpected ways. Co-presentation is also an exemplary model of cooperation for the larger good of the community.

Unique Arts Events Come from Partnership and Pairings

The artistic visions of each participating festival were stretched in progressive ways through the co-presentation partnership. It is no secret that artists are influenced by other artists, and that this influence can cross genre boundaries. The co-presentation model trains artistic directors and programmers to look anew at certain artists and opportunities. For instance, a musician who also writes novels or poetry may be an excellent subject for a co-presentation. Or a choreographer whose work is influenced by a poet. Or a writer who writes about jazz music. Or a documentary filmmaker who explores a musical instrument or a band. This is, then, a professional development opportunity for all of the festivals because the participants are pushed to look at the artistic forms being used and how they can best highlight them. For instance, a completely different artistic production is required when the poet who inspired the choreographer's work is actually present and will actually read from her work as part of the choreography. It is a completely different presentation when the novels of a musician are being showcased instead of his music. Each of these examples puts different demands on the co-presenters: Where should this be showcased? How will it be lit? How will the pacing of the event change? How will we weigh the different art forms—do we call it a night of poetry or a night of music? How should we promote the event and to whom? What the Fab 5 learned from the pairings and partnerships we developed is that more voices are better because they fill out and speak for the artist's full vision. Ordinarily, it wouldn't have been affordable, for instance, to have a poet who influenced a choreographer's work flown in from across the country to read as part of the dance piece. But the co-presentation model allowed for this possibility because the model includes both (a) artistic collaboration and (b) co-financing. The co-presentation model does not just serve the participating organizations, therefore. It allows the choreographer to realize her artistic vision more fully. And it allows artists to interact with one another in person, to further influence each other, to further hear and speak about their work. This benefits the national artistic community because it builds the trust and understanding on which innovation depends.

An aerial dance performance by Jayeden Walker at Hillside 2016.

Photo: Dean Palmer



In summary, the benefits of co-presentations are as follows:

To the artist:

- The opportunity to get before an entirely new audience
- A more committed relationship with a presenter or partner with whom the artist may have worked in a more unattached way before
- The opportunity to work with collaborators who have a less familiar cultural practice regarding presentation (writers on dance floors; musicians at writers' festivals; films showcased at music festivals)

To the presenter:

- A closer relationship with a certain artist
- The opportunity to engage a new festival audience
- Association with an experimental approach to producing/presenting

To the funding body or cultural institution:

- A stronger dialogue between artistic cultures
- Creation of new forms of inter-organizational dialogue and exchange
- Upgrading artist's skills and creative capacity
- Visibility and prestige from association with high-level multilateral cooperation among five festivals

Values and Strategies

Guelph Fab 5 Core Values

From the start, our five festivals were drawn to each other because we recognized we had similar goals related to presenting original artwork. When we created a more formal partnership, we put into words the nature of our commitment to enhancing our community as reflected in our shared core values:

- The arts as a means of changing the world
- Education as a core activity
- Innovation and new knowledge as primary goals

This exercise is key when one is developing a new partnership and trying to formalize its procedures. Starting with high-level framing of the investment keeps the discussion at the level of vision, which is motivating and satisfying, tapping into our collective idealism, our hopes for arts' influence over humanity, and our belief in our organizations' abilities to serve such a higher purpose. From our statement of values, we created key strategies that serve as a kind of blueprint for our partnering outlook and behaviour.

Guelph Fab 5 Key Strategies

- To work together to make optimum use of our resources;
- to inspire each festival through creative collaborations;
- to inspire our audience and community through our leadership;
- to continue to be dynamic in our presentations and approaches as well as open and adaptable to discovering the best way to develop;
- to continue to represent and support our community while presenting cutting-edge artists who are nationally and internationally recognized;
- to be a source of nourishment to heart and mind, cementing attachments to our culture, our community, and our humanity;
- to have regional, national and international impact.

Types of Co-Presentation

There are many types of collaboration possible within our model. Indeed, we have come to appreciate that what we do is sometimes defined under different terms such as *co-production*, *co-creation*, *co-design*, and *artistic collaboration*.

We will attempt to tease out the differences between these terms in an effort to clarify the parameters of our work and this manual.

Co-designing involves more than one entity working on the creation or generation of an idea and a solution or plan about how to present it. For example, a dance troupe and theatre troupe co-design an exploration of a theme—say, the relationship between humans and nature—and come up with a plan to present their exploration for best effect (e.g., in a natural setting where trees can be used as props and cameo stages; with live music and with the audience seated in a semi-circle).

A **co-production** is the attempt to implement the presentation solution or plan. Co-producers would be responsible for finding the perfect place, date, and time for presentation and, often, for finding the financial backing to secure the place and to pay the artists.

Co-creation involves more than one entity engaging in both the co-design and co-production processes. For example, in a co-creation, the dance troupe works with the theatre troupe and with a theatre management and production company to create and produce the piece and all entities have equally strong roles to play in both the creative and implementation stages.

The model we are proffering is a **co-presentation model** that sometimes shades into **co-production**. There is a lot of crossover in common usage of these two terms. For our purposes, we saw ourselves as co-presenters because we did not commission works or fundraise specifically for a work. And we did not creatively shape the final product's artistry: the artistic vision belonged to the artist and we only contributed to its realization by presenting it in a certain way. That way may have been highly artistic, but it is more about the "doing" rather than the "creating" or "designing" of ideas. We also did not supply a venue for elaborate rehearsals leading up to a show or a space for the incubation of an idea.

That being said, we did co-produce a cabaret in early 2014. It was a single night of hand-picked works of art from each of the five festivals, each designed to complement the other and to add to the momentum of the evening. Though our work was a co-presentation that involved the usual command of logistics, finances, operations, and promotion, it felt more like a co-production because it was a completely Fab 5 event, separate from our usual festivals, that drew attention not only to ourselves as an entity but also our partners, the Downtown Guelph Business Association and Guelph Tourism, from whom we sought financial backing for this particular show.

From our establishment of our values and strategies, we developed the Principles & Practices (otherwise known as our “Rules and Regs”) that would guide our practical behaviour.

Principles and Practices

1. One person—and one person only—represents each festival. That person is responsible for communicating with the other Fab 5 representatives and for communicating with their own festival personnel. The representative should have strong or reasonably strong decision-making powers within their organization so that the Fab 5 projects are not held up pending the approval of one of the partners.
2. Each festival representative contributes at least 120 hours per year to the partnership in the way of meetings, planning and execution of the events.
3. Any financial support of the Fab 5 project should go to the festivals, not individuals, and then the festivals themselves will pay their staff for hours worked on this project.
4. Job roles for this project: Each festival representative must take on certain facets of the partnership work. This work will accord with their strengths and interests. For the Guelph Fab 5, the five different areas of responsibility are as follows:
 - Hospitality
 - Secretary and Marketing
 - Human Resources, Risk Management, Marketing, Finance, Communications
 - Finances and Fundraising
 - Operations

“Working with the Fab 5 has been a great experience for Downtown Guelph. We are proud to support them and are happy to be associated with such high quality festivals, that continue to delight and surprise and surpass expectations. They’re getting better all the time.”

Marty Williams

Executive Director,
Downtown Guelph Business
Association

5. The partners will meet every two to four weeks.
6. The host festival* pays venue and technical production costs.
7. The visiting festival pays artist fees, including any travel and accommodation fees.
8. If the host festival adds artists to the visiting festival's line-up, the host festival pays for those artists.
9. If there is a limited amount of money for promotion and for technical equipment, this must be shared among the festivals in the course of a given year.
9. The host festival takes the gate revenue for the event that involves visiting festivals and co-presentations.
10. All organizations must include the Fab 5 logo on promotional material for the event that includes Fab 5 co-presentation(s).
11. All organizations must also use the phrase “co-presented by” or some version of this phrase in their promotional materials, along with the logo(s) of the relevant organization(s) that are the visiting festivals.

*The “host festival” is the festival that is either taking place on its usual dates or has decided to run a particular event or showcase on a given date. The “visiting festival” is the festival that is coming to the host festival with its artists or artwork. The visiting festival is then partnering with the host festival to produce something unique that, individually, the festivals could not have done.

Trends that Favour Co-presentations and Co-productions

- ✿ Increased number and visibility of arts festivals
- ✿ Increased promotion of cultural cities and regions, such as the Cultural Capitals of Canada award (worth \$2 million); Municipality of the Year Award from Festivals & Events Ontario; Creative Network of Canada Awards of Excellence
- ✿ Improved communication tools (internet, Skype, social media) that make meetings and information sharing easier
- ✿ Shift in focus of some government agencies from developing single art forms or organizations toward strengthening the network that supports them and encouraging ties between them

“Collaboration” has become a key word in the arts-presentation world in the last six years. Grantors use it to describe best practices and eligibility criteria, measuring organizations by the scope and number of partnerships and co-creative initiatives they form. For instance, Canadian Heritage has a Canada Cultural Investment Fund that supports Strategic Initiatives. One of their eligibility criteria is that the proposed project “involve the collaboration of at least three partners, including the lead applicant.” This criterion is echoed in almost *all* of the Canada 150 grants to emerge from the Ontario and Canadian governments for the 2017 Sesquicentennial.

Hence, the Guelph Fab 5’s organic coming-together as a group, which simple physical proximity and social networks helped realize, turned out, after about five years of our working together, to be *just* the thing that federal and provincial grantors as well as municipal economic development departments were looking to inspire.

Why is Collaboration Suddenly So Popular?

A collaborator used to be a pejorative term for people who capitulated to a foreign power occupying their country. In World War II, for instance, the Nazis referred to residents of an occupied country who helped them carry out their deeds as

“collaborators,” as though these people were equals and had freely chosen to assist the occupiers of their country in acts of murder and persecution. “Collaboration” still has a faint tinge of something disrespectful or suspicious, but that is disappearing in the wake of research and innovation that describe it as a basic method of flourishing in the world.

Trade, as a form of collaboration with respect to goods, has always been popular between people, cities, and nations. But as our society becomes more information-focused and less industry-dependent, our ability to collaborate with other nations to produce a single product and our ability to process information from all over the world hinges on teamwork and sharing. The push in education has been to offer programs that accent teamwork skills, management of collaborative teams, and communication and information-sharing to meet the new economic reality. Collaborative tools and platforms—from Skype to Twitter—have become commonplace meeting grounds where ideas are shared with a view to creating something together, even if it is as simple as understanding.

With this new approach to work comes the co-working phenomenon where even freelancers, who generally work alone, are now renting co-working spaces. Collaboration is increasingly viewed as a virtue alongside openness, community, accessibility and sustainability. And researchers are catching up to the phenomenon’s hold on our cultural psyche, arguing that collaboration can improve workflow and productivity, heighten the group members’ aspirations for achievement and their level of investment, as well as their tenacity and resilience when they meet challenges and obstacles (Schneider, Rosen)

There is even a small area of research called the “neuroscience of sharing” that lauds collaboration as a salutary practice that boosts collective ambition, expands understanding, and promotes trust. In fact, one study of inter-organizational collaboration points to trust as one of the hallmark features of collaborations, a feature that is fragile, however, because it is built up over time, misunderstood, and vulnerable to outside pressures. University of Oxford researchers discovered that even successful collaborations may be undermined through external meddling and policy steering (Fischer).

The Importance of Trust

“Marie Zimmerman’s presentation on the Fab 5 in Guelph was instrumental in the model used for the Mississippi Mills festivals consortium. Her presentation on collaboration and cooperation in Guelph has inspired our whole community to work cooperatively in music, in puppetry, in dance, in celebration of the arts. Our festivals and events reach out to each other for support, for collaboration, and for information. We are quicker to share than we once were, and readier to see opportunities to assist each other. We no longer work in exclusive silos. In addition, the presence of the consortium was instrumental in securing the Eastern Ontario Events Centre, a resource-sharing cooperative for festivals and events, which is now located and operated in our community. We continue to work to strengthen all our festivals, and remain grateful for the insight and support from Ms. Zimmerman.

Sandy Irvin

Communications Officer,
Governor General’s
Performing Arts Awards,
Ottawa

This makes sense to us since trust is not visible or obvious to outside observers (board members, other staff) who may feel the need to comment on the collaboration or steer it in a different direction. It is one thing to attain collective intelligence in this process of co-presenting, but it is quite another to attain a spirit of collective creation where no one partner is trying to get a leg up on another or suspecting that another is trying to do so. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of building trust with your partner(s) before beginning a co-presentation. Trust is built from a number of best practices we may take for granted:

- 1. Tell the truth. Communicate openly: If you think it’s a bad idea, say so gently and productively.**
- 2. Accent your commonalities, shared aims, and camaraderie, not the discordant features of your organizations.**
- 3. Take responsibility: if something goes wrong and it’s your fault, take responsibility and focus on damage control and next steps right away.**
- 4. Create your Roles and Responsibilities charter together.**
- 5. Draw up your Policies and Practices or Rules and Regs document together.**
- 6. Lead by example: share your knowledge; share your vulnerabilities.**
- 7. Think abundance: there will be more than enough opportunities to go around and you are not in competition for scarce resources.**
- 8. Start and end meetings on time. The person assigned the Secretary role can ensure this.**

When there’s trust, there’s innovation, risk-taking, creative thinking and productivity. Without trust, there’s self-protection, self-interest, self-glorification—none of these things help a group attain its goals.

Start with Small Steps

If you find the prospect of working with several other organizations or partners daunting, you should find a single experienced partner with whom you could undertake a co-presentation as a start. Select a co-presenter whose work intrigues you and would complement the work you present, and whose experience with the venues you have in mind would be valuable and time-saving. Meeting with this partner is critical at all phases of the co-presentation. If you cannot meet face to face, find Skype opportunities wherever you can. Review the roles and responsibilities you will each assume and ask questions of each other. If you are wondering whether or not your partner is going to pay for that extra bank of speakers you need for the co-presentation, you must table this question. Otherwise, you may end up carrying away both unanticipated expenses and resentment from the experience.

Phases of the Co-presentation Process

1. Once you have met with your collaborator and discussed possibilities, start developing your **Event Checklist**:

Have you...

- Decided on objectives and type of event?
- Found other people who will organise the event with you?
- Divided up the tasks that need to be accomplished?

In your list of tasks to be accomplished, have you included...

- Setting a date for your event?
- Picking a venue?
- Setting a time?

Have you...

- Made a budget?
- Made a plan for obtaining funds?
- Drawn up contracts?
- Secured your venue?
- Obtained relevant licences/permits relating to food/alcohol/noise/use of space?
- Investigated whether roads need to be closed?
- Investigated whether artists need travel and work visas?
- Undertaken a risk assessment?
- Considered risk/safety issues?
- Addressed technical production needs and costs?
- Addressed any waste management issues?

Have you...

- Created a plan for promoting your event?
- Set an agenda?
- Invited participants?
- Made sure your venue caters to people with disabilities?
- Taken care of all the details, such as
 - Organised transportation, if necessary?
 - Ordering food and organising the meals?
 - Organising accommodation, if necessary?
- Confirmed the attendance of your artists and MCs?
- Created a map to your venue or given directions?
- Arranged for any audience or professional development opportunities, such as a Q & A between artists and audience?

- Finalized all artistic and technical aspects of the co-presentation?

Are you prepared to...

- Be flexible in case anything unexpected happens?
- Of utmost importance, **is someone accountable for making sure each of these tasks is accomplished?** Remember to divvy up duties among your collaborators so that these areas are covered:
 - Hospitality
 - Marketing
 - Human Resources, Risk Management, Communications
 - Finances and Fundraising
 - Operations

Manage Risks, Big and Small

Within a table, create a column with the different aspects of your co-presentation clearly listed under Plan A. Then create a column that notes what can go wrong in the Plan A scenario. Next, create a Plan B column that shows how you will respond to the unfortunate eventuality. It should look something like this below (these are small risks listed):

Co-Presentation Partners: Eden Mills Writers' Festival (EMWF) and Guelph Dance Festival (GDF)		
Plan A	Risk	Plan B
GDF will mount Portal Dance Project's <i>The Hands of the Beautiful Swimmers</i> at Studio 404, Guelph	(a) The venue is suddenly unavailable. (b) A dancer falls ill.	Have a back-up venue on hold. Ensure text for updates is written and ready to be posted on website & social media. Have an understudy dancer, if GDF can afford.
The EMWF will have Stephen Heighton, the poet who inspired the dance piece, in attendance. He will be asked to read.	The poet cannot make it after all or he will be late.	EMWF will select a reader of Heighton's poetry to stand in for him until he arrives.
The GDF will pay for Portal Dance Project's artist fees.	Cashflow is unexpectedly weak at the moment.	Another festival or the co-presenter will be asked to front fees for now.
The EMWF will pay for Stephen Heighton's reading, travel and accommodation.	Cannot get a discount on accommodation, as required by budget.	Consider Airbnb, billeting. Ask other co-presentation partners for advice, help.
	The weather is dreadful and debilitating.	Have a postponement date at the ready.

“The best destinations create a strong network of stakeholders that take an active role in shaping their collective future. The Guelph Fab 5 have been hard at work on this for over eight years, and they are to be commended for celebrating their differences while finding creative collaborations to meet their shared needs that ultimately benefit themselves, their audiences and Guelph itself. Being able to tap into this already formed network has been a tremendous support, and has expedited the destination development work we have been conducting in Guelph.”

Andrea Gardi

Senior Project Manager,
Regional Tourism
Organization 4 Inc., Huron,
Perth, Waterloo, Wellington

In our model, the host festival takes care of the venue and technical production requirements while the visiting festival takes care of the artist fees. In this model, the host festival would also be responsible for access to rehearsal space and outreach activities such as workshops or talks. Clearly, the host and visiting festivals would need to talk these issues through since the request for rehearsal space and outreach opportunities often comes from the artist. Such requests would obviously affect the artist fees and the involvement of the host festival beyond the discrete event.

There still remains the issue of who will pay for the **marketing and promotion**. In our model, marketing and promotion is a joint responsibility. All of us promote events of the Guelph Fab 5 through our social media (both individual festivals, plus the Fab 5 platforms), newsletters, and press releases.

In some cases, if a partnering organization has access to funds for artists' travel or funds for marketing, then that organization may elect to place its own artists in an event or to give some of the funds to a partnering organization. This depends on the freedom that the fund allows, naturally.

Further, some partners have better access to rehearsal space or viewing space. When this advantage is brought to the table, then other facets of the co-production could be negotiated. For instance, if one festival has free rehearsal space for all of the dance troupe members, then it's possible that that festival would not be required to spend so much on a print ad as the other partners would. It all depends on what is negotiated among the co-presenting members.

Contracts

Once we had discussed our co-presented event in detail and drawn up an event check list, risk assessment, and event plan, we did not also draw up a contract for the co-presentation. We did not feel it was necessary. However, if there was a lot of money behind these co-presentations or complicated logistics and technical production, then we would likely draw up a contract for all participants to sign. As it stood, we discussed in detail the issues that we would normally put in a contract between co-presenters, including who is responsible for what:

1. Technical requirements
2. Accommodation, hospitality, per diems;
3. Travel
4. Tax issues (including withholding tax) and work permits;
5. Insurance
6. Rehearsal space
7. Production meetings and regular communications
8. Fees
9. Media communications and marketing
10. Any master classes, outreach, workshops or other professional development or audience-development activities
11. The opening or premiere

Fees and Budget

The finances of a co-presentation can be confusing, so it is in your best interests to keep the budget clean and simple. In our model, we were all paid exactly the same hourly rate for our work on a co-presentation and we had a set amount that we would not exceed in a given year. Hence, if one co-presenter actually devoted more hours to a project than we had allocated in our annual budget for them, then that co-presenter would have simply worked some hours for free. The person in charge of the finances for the Guelph Fab 5 would try to keep on top of the allocations and alert each co-presenter about their status (whether they were over or under their allocated hours for the year) as they submitted invoices.

Our project was grant-funded, so we simply invoiced against a set amount allocated per year. In a new model that we have begun discussing, each festival would allocate funds in their individual organizational budgets to fund co-presentations, particularly artists' fees. They would add the co-presentations to their organization's job description for them so they would, in effect, be paid for the work. Each participating festival has a board of directors and either charitable status or not-for-profit status. The boards of each festival champion the

co-presentations as important collaborative opportunities that benefit the community, the artists, and the festivals as new knowledge is created and audiences expand. Thus, budgeting for a staff person to participate in the co-presentations is not an obstacle.

If you are not sure how to allocate your co-presentation fees, the lead on the project (usually the person who came up with the original idea) should prompt a meeting with all of the partners to review the budget in detail. Sometimes a project's budget will change because of a reduction or expansion in something (more musicians or fewer; an artist no longer needs transportation; dancers require longer rehearsal period). You will need to re-visit fees and contributions at this point. What will help you in this process is (a) open communication and (b) a clear understanding of everyone's roles and responsibilities.

In our model, the host festival takes the ticket revenue. This was never a problem or source of resentment because each festival took turns being a host at least once per year. Sometimes there was no revenue to be had (e.g., when the event was free); sometimes there was. In the future, we may embark on a profit-share model whereby the participating festivals will share the ticket revenue of an event, provided that they are participating equally. Any "profit" would, of course, be reinvested in the participating organizations so that more co-presentations could take place in the future. In this model, each organization is invested in promoting the event to their networks not only because it will get their name associated with a particular artist or festival but also because it could bring a financial boost to their organization.

Communication

“The work of Guelph’s Fab 5 is a truly innovative example of how arts organizations can work collaboratively to further programming mandates as well as increase artistic engagement and resource sharing in our respective communities. In my role as a dance presenter in St John’s, NL, I have turned to this group, for not only inspiration, but for practical logistical insight as organizations here grapple with building a similar network entity. I can say with all honesty that establishing a framework such as this is not easy; it takes deep commitment, a refined ability to think big, a tremendous level of professional visioning and teamwork. I will watch as this group builds future initiatives and I will continue to share their growth within my own community. I believe Fab 5 is setting an important precedent for other communities to follow; this work needs to continue and flourish; our civic and social life will be better for it!”

Calla LaChance

Executive Director,
Neighbourhood Dance
Works, Festival of
New Dance, St. John’s,
Newfoundland

Reach out often. Ask for clarification. Meet in person.

This group was very good at meeting regularly, taking solid minutes with action items, discussing the budget in person, and planning the year ahead.

We still had a few rough moments, though, and they were related to

- Assumptions we make
- Imbalance among organizations

Assumptions

Every artistic discipline has its own discourse and epistemological approach to discovery. We had no trouble respecting this and working with artists and organizations whose work differed from our own. We did, however, often overlook simple things because we had artistic blinders on, as it were.

- The Writers’ Festival did not book a sound technician for the performances of musicians because they are accustomed to simply using a microphone and sound system for the speeches and readings of their artists.
- The Dance Festival didn’t have a podium for the writer who came to present his work.
- One of the music festivals didn’t have the right kind of floor for a dance performance.

In two out of three of these simple examples, the technical detail needed was expensive and so should have figured in the early talks about the co-presentation.

In addition to being open and truthful, curious and respectful as a partner, you need to walk your partner through the very basics of your presentation so they see it and understand it as well as you.

Imbalance among co-presenters

Certain partners contributed significantly more resources to a given project than other partners, and for the most part, this was unexpected. The capacity of each organization is not the same and you would do well to be upfront about this—formally

and informally—from the outset. The number of staff or the involvement of the board at each organization was not the same. And so the amount of time a given Fab 5 representative had for our co-presentation project was not always equal to the time other representatives were giving it. In some cases, this led to resentment, exasperation from poor communication (emails that went unanswered, in particular) or frustration from the wait time required for a decision from a festival.

This is why it is important that the representative of whatever organization with whom you choose to work is a *decision-maker* who does not have to check in with someone else before releasing wind into the sails of an idea. Equally important is the continuity of the representative. We were set back every time we had to get a new festival representative up to speed. In some cases, we were never really sure of their commitment to or understanding of what we were doing, but we did not have the time or world to stop what we were doing to explain.

Partner Communication

- When planning a co-presentation, the host festival gives the visiting festival a sense of (a) where the event could happen; (b) when it could happen; (c) whether there are any restrictions on space or technical production; (d) what sort of artistic tenor may be most suitable. The visiting/co-presenting festival should work internally among their staff to determine what they would like to present. They then offer that to the host festival. There is some back-and-forth and give-and-take to be expected in talks between the host festival and the visiting festival, but it is important that the visiting festival arrives at the table with firm ideas in mind. This often necessitates that a full internal discussion take place among key people at the visiting festival. This avoids difficulties in communication with the host festival, which must be prepared to book spaces and promote the event as soon as possible.
- Ensure there is a clear line of contact. Don't send e-mails to everyone with a question; send them only to the person from whom you want an answer.
- Have one “general manager” (festival representative) overseeing a performance (and not doing any of the specific

tasks). That way there is someone overseeing the bigger picture and there are always at least two people with their eyes on it.

- Simple communication is vital – pick up the phone!
- Co-presentations are usually at festivals rather than at one-off events. The rationale for this is that the festivals offer a visiting festival/artist greater exposure through heavier marketing campaigns. One-off events during the year that are not connected to the festival's main dates can be great opportunities for Fab 5 partners, but we need to keep several things in mind: (a) promotional campaign exposure; (b) size of audience; (c) potential burn-out (doing lots of things throughout the year can be exhausting). Remind each other of this often, especially when great opportunities present themselves during the no-festival months.

Artist Communication

- Provide a welcome letter that includes the name of the person with whom the artist should communicate. Be sure to state that though they are performing at the Host Festival, their contract is with the co-presenting Festival and they should correspond with them directly. The co-presenter will then go to the Host Festival with any questions or concerns.
- Have publicity forms so everyone collects the same information (bios and photos) with the same word counts. To save money, have all publicity approved before sending it to the graphic designer.
- Realize that different art forms have very different needs.
- Provide artists with a contract that stipulates when they will be paid, what you may offer (comps, publicity, venue, stage hands, etc.), what you expect from them (meet timelines, promo pictures and bios, etc.) – a simple but complete contract.
- We need to be sure that we are really providing for the artists, and since it is not always clear to other arts organizations what, for instance, a film director may expect, it is imperative that we are clear in our communications about what we are offering – e.g., touring opportunities, new audiences, higher artist fees, wider audience reach, etc.

Board Communication

At several points in our co-presentation tenure, we discussed whether we should bring all of our boards together to brainstorm ideas and update everyone. We thought it would be beneficial to have entire organizations working together. We quickly realized that the beauty in having five leaders who represent five different festivals is that it is pared down, focused and not wildly difficult to schedule meetings. Since all of our board members are volunteers who are already holding down full-time jobs and committed volunteer positions, it works best to write regular updates for them, apprising them of our activities and thanking them for their support. Indeed, it is each festival representative's responsibility to impart to their boards a full explanation of all activities and progress.

What We Learned

1. Do Your Research

We need to be rigorous in our knowledge-sharing and each festival needs to take initiative and responsibility for understanding the piece that will be co-presented. In one case, the host festival was surprised at the content of the visiting festival's presentation. In this case, insisting that the host festival do some research before signing off on the co-presentation might have made a difference. Oftentimes, these gaps in understanding occur because of time pressures, not because of indifference. In other cases, the host festival asked another festival to co-present something the host festival was already presenting. In these cases, the opportunity for creative collaboration was limited. The visiting festival was "servicing" the host festival in a sort of marriage of convenience by putting resources and time behind the production. But the investment was different than if the visiting festival had chosen the work themselves. Both are viable models, but we should be aware of the difference because it often determines the degrees of investment and initiative the visiting festival assumes. In the latter case, the Fab 5 group as a whole should be aware of the model in play so that they can step in, assist, ask questions in order to ensure smooth operations and communications.

2. Keep an Open Mind

Sometimes, the host festival would ask a visiting festival for a work or genre that was not the specialty of the visiting festival. This required the visiting festival to go outside their normal scope, which was interesting and potentially broadening. For instance, the Dance Festival asked the Hillside Festival to book a dancey band for their after-party and named some local cover bands as suitable options. The Hillside Festival does not book cover bands; they book original music. However, the outreach of this gesture and the sheer happiness of the Dance Festival participants made this co-presentation more than workable.

3. Remember the Rules

Not every host festival follows the details of the promotion agreement, which can leave the visiting festival unsatisfied with the lack of recognition. Host festivals were urged routinely to remember the rules, but in the flurry of preparations for their own festival, they forgot to include the Fab 5 logo on promo materials and further forgot to acknowledge the visiting festival via logo or statement in the program. One of the rules of our partnership agreement is the presence of on-site Fab 5 promotion and the presence of both the Fab 5 logo and the visiting festival's logo on all printed marketing materials related to the co-presented event.

The promotion of co-presentations worked best when special posters or images of the event were disseminated by the host festival. This way, all partnering festivals could easily post the image on social media. A related responsibility of visiting and host festivals is the promotion of the event via email and newsletter.

4. Avoid Two-Timing

Once a co-presentation agreement has been established, the host festival is responsible for communicating to the visiting festival when and if other partners and co-presenters come onto the project. The beauty of keeping the co-presentation between two festivals—host and visiting—is that it is cleaner and clearer to promote. The visiting festival gets more attention. The beauty of the host festival bringing on more than one co-presenter is the possibility of increased promotion and increased in-kind sponsorship for the host festival. It is important to remember in the latter arrangement that all of the co-presenters should be known to each other *and happy to cohabit* on the bill. We had some surprises with visiting festivals discovering at the last minute that organizations with whom they did not have stellar relations or whose values were not shared were also going to co-present an artwork.

5. Watch Your Step

Breaches of confidentiality and conflicts of interest can creep into the work of co-presenters as much as any regular organization. All participating festivals signed confidentiality agreements at the start so that matters related to human resources, for instance, were never discussed beyond the walls of the meeting room. We had a couple of cases where a festival representative had a conflict of interest. Not-for-profits are vulnerable to conflicts of interest because so many volunteers seek to help the organization do well in its business. Sometimes, they wish to be paid for some form of the work they have done. Sometimes those volunteers are relatives, and sometimes this puts staff at the not-for-profit in a conflict of interest where they have a duty to care for the organization and a conflicting interest in promoting the work of the relative. In one confusing case, a representative recommended that a relative do some work for us as a volunteer. We agreed to this, but then several months into the work a different festival representative suggested the relative be paid for his work. The issue of remuneration suddenly shed light on the conflict of interest. What ensued was awkward and hurtful, though no one intended it to be so. It would be better to avoid such agreements with relatives since even if there is no financial conflict of interest, the evaluation of the relative's work can become a source of much squirming.

6. Make Ticket Purchasing Easy

One of the key things we learned from holding a major five-festival cabaret is that we should align or amalgamate our ticketing practices. First, we need a ticket price that would attract youth—perhaps even a group rate. Second, we should consider fundraising heavily in order to make a 5-festival event free in order to attract a wider crowd. This would be one way for the audience to experience all of the festivals. Third, having all the tickets to all the festivals sold in one place would go a long way toward encouraging people to buy into another festival. Our cabaret tickets were sold at the Bookshelf, a local bookstore, but tickets to the rest of the festivals were sold through other venues and platforms. Fourth, complimentary tickets can be the bane of a not-for-profit festival's existence. They were an issue at our cabaret as the number we had to give out with so many participating artists

became unmanageable and the event thus lost money. Be sure to communicate to artists and festival partners why there is a strict limit to the complimentary tickets offered. Comps were offered only to VIPs who spoke at the event—our major sponsors, the DGBA and Guelph Tourism; Liz Sandals, MP; the Mayor of the City of Guelph (+ their guests)—and to media.

7. Sharing Sponsors Is a Nice Idea — in Theory

We have found that it does not work to share sponsors and donors. It is better to seek these out individually. Why? Sponsors support a festival because they believe in what they do and they appreciate the art form. To ask them to support all five festivals seemed insensitive and almost exploitive. Another reason it did not work is that some sponsors already supported most of our festivals, so they wondered why they would be asked to further support the Fab 5 when they were already giving a discount to the participating individual festivals. A third reason sharing sponsors does not work is that some sponsors who like the idea want privileges that not every festival can offer in return for their patronage. For instance, not every festival can offer a free booth at their festival and the opportunity for the sponsors to sell their services or merchandise.

8. Once You've Got the Hang of It, Widen Your Net

We learned that our model incites curiosity and admiration from a lot of people. We also learned that since we started working together, a few more festivals have cropped up in town and have assumed a capacity that would make them suitable collaborators and partners. Some of the individual festivals had already started their own partnerships with these newer festivals (e.g., the Dance Festival partners with another music festival, Kazoo!). We started discussing widening our net to include more festivals in the Fab 5 and to change our name. The staff at Regional Tourism Organization 4 (RTO4) became interested in this idea when Hillside broached the idea of doing a “Festival of Festivals” in the city of Guelph—a festival that would include programming of all of the arts festivals. It was proposed that the Fab 5 model could be used to run it. RTO4 set up a meeting with all of the local festivals, and they handed over the reigns to the City to oversee it. This Festival Committee has met once thus far (fall 2016).

9. Fund the Future

To continue with the co-presenting model, each festival needs to agree to set aside money in their regular budgets for co-presentations with other festivals. We've earmarked \$2,000 as the minimum amount each festival should dedicate to co-presentations. Though each festival is committed to the idea of continuing the collaborative partnership, not every festival can commit that much money to events that do not expressly achieve their own mandate. We are hoping, therefore, that we can sustain the model through the efforts of those festivals that find the means, and for the rest we will fundraise for help with funding co-presentations.

10. Lead by Leaning

Continuing to rely on partners for co-presentations is an important feature of the participants' commitment to their community. A music festival may program dance on its own if it feels confident in its ability to judge the quality of the work. A dance festival may program musicians or a band on its own if it feels the music fits their programming. While this is perfectly normal, we have to ask ourselves whether this is the best way of operating within our community. The co-presentation model teaches us that when we foreground another festival and go arm-in-arm into a production with them, we are leading by example: we are showing our community that we are interdependent, as people and as organizations, and that it is uplifting, salutary, and economically more viable to showcase another organization whose life work is the genre you intend to showcase.

Highlights from Our Co-presentations



Mix Mix Collective performed *Jack Your Body*, a high-energy dance performance that pays homage to American street dance culture. The performance was co-presented by Guelph Dance Festival at the Hillside Festival, July 2014. The troupe posed, strutted, and wacked their way through soul train, paradise garage, and other iconic street-dance scenarios, each of which explored issues of race, gender, and social status as they traced the evolution of underground social dances from the 70s-90s. This piece was performed on the Hillside Main Stage and witnessed by 700 patrons. It was a great way to introduce the Hillside crowds to contemporary dance that was energetic, playful, and highly accessible. PHOTO: TEIGAN BAKER



The Guelph Dance Festival filled Hillside Inside's 2015 intermissions at the River Run Centre with dance performances that were very well received. About 160 people saw Megan O'Donnell's contemporary dance piece, *A time to come home* and over 750 people saw Frog In Hand's *Cafe Noisette*, a look into 20's swing dancing. Later that day, Colleen Snell from Frog in Hand provided a swing workshop to

10 eager participants. Frog In Hand's performance was sensational. If the intermission performance wasn't enough to wow people, then their improvised on-stage performance did. Amy Millan, the lead singer of STARS, invited them onto the Main Stage at the end of their show where they danced improvisationally to a huge and appreciative crowd.

PHOTO: PETER GRIMALDI

The Eden Mills Writers' Festival co-presented Kid Koala's musical reading of his graphic novel, *Space Cadet*, at Hillside Inside 2015. The event was a sensory mother lode with not only turn tabling, video of his graphic novel, and Kid Koala's voice, but also scent. Kid Koala brought several "kits" containing slim glass vials of scents such as "urban chaos," which patrons were instructed to open at key moments in the reading. The event was held at a central downtown cafe, Planet Bean, and it was standing-room only with 72 attendees captivated by Kid's multi-sensory presentation. PHOTO: PETER GRIMALDI



In 2015, the Eden Mills Writers' Festival helped kick off the 17th annual Guelph Dance Festival with the co-production of *The Hands of the Beautiful Swimmers*, an up-close-and-personal performance by Janet Johnson that involved three dancers performing with the poetry of Kingston poet/writer Steven Heighton. This ghostly dance was inspired by the notion of power and forgiveness found in the act of surrendering: through memory, love, decay, and renewal. Steven Heighton, who inspired this work with his poetry in 1999, was able to come to this event 17 years later and read from his book of poetry, which filled the afternoon and evening performances exquisitely. 78 patrons witnessed this intimate performance. PHOTO: ANUTA SKRYPNYCHENKO

The Guelph Jazz Festival co-presented trumpeter Gary Diggins at the Eden Mills Writers' Festival Gala in 2014, which was part of a festival kick-off cabaret at the Eden Mills Community Hall. Hosted by Kim Murphy, the evening consisted of music by Mike Malone Jazz Trio and readings by

authors Jasmine Aziz and Kim Moritsugu. Jasmine's reading was interspersed with Gary's inspired interpretations of her writing, underscoring the natural affinity between music and literature. An audience of 52 attended the event.

On Thursday November 5th, 2015, the Eden Mills Writers' Festival co-presented the opening night film, *Al Purdy Was Here*, a feature film tribute to the great Canadian poet, Al Purdy, featuring readings, reminiscences and performances from some of the greatest names in Canadian letters and music. The screening was followed by a Q&A with the film's director, Brian D. Johnson. Audience participation in the Q&A was strong and lively – evidence of the film's success in conveying a far more complex portrait of the poet than that suggested by his public persona as a boisterous lover of booze, brawls, and verse. Over 100 people attended this event. PHOTO: PETER GRIMALDI



Hillside Festival co-presented two singer-songwriters, Alanna Gurr and Nefe, at the Eden Mills Writers' Festival 2016 opening gala. The evening interwove music

performances from Gurr and Nefe with literary readings by Nicholas Ruddock and Sarah Mian. Seventy-five people attended this event. PHOTOS: DAN HARASYMCHUK

At Hillside Inside 2014, the Eden Mills Writers' Festival co-presented "Lit Music," a night celebrating the lyrics and music of Broken Social Scene's acclaimed album, *You Forgot It In People*. The winner and two finalists of the short story contest of the *Broken Social Scene Story Project* (Anansi Press) read their works while the Darcys played the songs that inspired the stories. This was a packed event that people still talk about.

The Eden Mills Writers' Festival co-presented the Sun Stage's Spoken Word performances at the Hillside Summer Festival in 2016. Thirteen artists performed over two-and-a-half days to an audience of 100 to 300 per performance, for a total of at least 3,900 patrons.

PHOTO: PETER GRIMALDI



HADWIN'S JUDGEMENT

"Gorgeously photographed, compulsively watchable and deeply sympathetic." *Globe & Mail*

"A timely warning, engaging, cinematic and yet refreshingly unapologetic." *POLY Magazine*

A TRUE STORY OF MYTH, MADNESS AND GREED

A FILM BY SASHA SNOW

Based on the novel *The Golden Spruce* by John Vaillant (winner of the Governor General's Award)

Author John Vaillant will lead a post-film discussion

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 6:30 PM
BOOKSHELF CINEMA

\$10 tickets available now from **The Bookshelf** or at the door

A Fab 5 presentation by Eden Mills Writers' Festival and Guelph Film Festival

The Guelph Film Festival co-presented the film, *Hadwin's Judgement*, on the closing night of the Eden Mills Writers' Festival, September 14, 2015, at the Bookshelf Cinema. *Hadwin's Judgement* is based on the book, *The Golden Spruce*, by John Vaillant. Vaillant himself lead a post-film discussion. This event was a great success for both festivals, with 97 patrons in attendance. It provided excellent awareness for the upcoming Guelph Film Festival in early November.



On February 7th, 2014, we launched our new co-presentation model with our first ever Fab 5 Cabaret during the Hillside Inside weekend. We presented five performances that night. They included Tony Dekker (Hillside), of Great Lake Swimmers' fame, and Portal Dance Project (Dance). The 10-member band, GUH (Jazz), performed a musical score to the Festival of Moving Media's screening of Georges Méliès' 1912 film, *Conquest of the Pole*. The Eden Mills

Writers' Festival offered Maestro Fresh Wes, the pioneering, Juno-award winning "godfather of rap." This was the first time all five festivals worked together to put so much artistic diversity on the stage at once. This gave the audience of 130 an excellent opportunity to get a taste of other art forms and the festivals that are such an important part of our community.

PHOTOS: PETER GRIMALDI

Works Cited

Arndt and R. Glenn Richey (2005), "Supply Chain Collaboration: What's Really Happening," *International Journal of Logistic Management*, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 237-256.

Fischer, Michael D (28 September 2012). "Organizational Turbulence, Trouble and Trauma." *Organization Studies*. 33 (9): 1153-1173.

Hill, Kelly. Factors in Canadians' Arts Attendance in 2010: An Analysis of Attendance at Art Galleries, Theatres, Classical Music Performances, Popular Music Performances, and Cultural Festivals. Hill Strategies Research Inc. Statistical insights on the arts, Vol. 11 No. 1. September 2012

Petri, Inga. *The Value of Presenting: A Study of Performing Arts Presentation in Canada*. Commissioned by CAPACOA.

Rosen, Evan, *The Culture of Collaboration: Maximizing Time, Talent and Tools to Create Value in the Global Economy*. 2009.

Schneider, Florian: *Collaboration: Some Thoughts Concerning New Ways of Learning and Working Together*, in: *Academy*, edited by Angelika Nollert and Irit Rogoff, 280 pages, Revolver Verlag,

Toivonen, Tuukka (2013) "The Emergence of the Social Innovation Community: Towards Collaborative Changemaking?" University of Oxford. Available on SSRN.

Appendix A

The following collaborative agreement (pp. 47–50) is one of the first steps you will need to take to consolidate how you will communicate, the roles each member will play, how decisions will be made, how money will be spent and accounted for, and how reports will be prepared.

Trillium Guelph Fab 5 Collaborative Agreement

Names of member groups

1) **Guelph Contemporary Dance Festival**

123 Woolwich Street, 2nd Floor, Guelph, ON, N1H 3V1
519-780-2220

Project contact: Catrina von Radecki,
Co-Artistic Director and General Manager

2) **Hillside Festival**

123 Woolwich Street, 2nd Floor, Guelph, ON, N1H 3V1
519-763-6396

Project contact: Marie Zimmerman, Executive Director

3) **Guelph Jazz Festival**

123 Woolwich Street, 2nd Floor, Guelph, ON, N1H 3V1
519 763 4952

Project contact: Julie Hastings: Director of Operations

4) **Festival of Moving Media (Guelph Film Festival)**

Mailing address: Festival of Moving Media c/o Ed Video,
P.O. Box 816, Guelph, ON, N1H 6L8

Office: 40 Baker Street, Guelph, ON, N1H 6R7

519-836-4993

Project contact: Carolyn Meili, Festival Coordinator

5) **Eden Mills Writers' Festival**

38 Memorial Street, Eden Mills, ON, NOB 1P0
519-856-0038

Project contact: Peter Grimaldi: Board of Directors, Director of
Hospitality, Fundraising and Photography

Lead Applicant & Spokesperson

The Guelph Contemporary Dance Festival will be the lead applicant. The dance festival is in a healthy position; and, as the mid-size festival of the five, it would have the time to manage the project and ensure all reporting is carried out with the Trillium Foundation.

Marie Zimmerman from the Hillside Festival will take on the role of spokesperson for this project. Marie is a writer who also acted as publicist for the dance festival, and she was Artistic Director of the Eden Mills Writers' Festival. She has also volunteered at both the Guelph Jazz Festival and the Festival of Moving Media as an MC and coordinator. She therefore has a clear understanding of the participating organizations and can speak publicly and knowledgably on our behalf.

Each project member is the head of her/his organization, though their titles vary, and thus each is most suited to represent their organization around the table.

Purpose

Research has shown that people who attend one kind of arts event are likely to attend another kind, and this was what propelled us to form a collaborative group five years ago. The benefit of our presenting partnership is that it would strengthen each of the five organizations' capacity by building audiences and by sharing resources. It would also promote cultural and artistic activities for all ages and abilities and would help build a healthy and vibrant arts community in Guelph. This project would stimulate economic growth through our partnership with Guelph Tourism and the DGBA and increase community engagement by providing a model that promotes artistic collaboration and co-presentation.

Time Frame

The collaborative agreement will become active on November 1st, 2012, when we submit this application to the Ontario Trillium Foundation. We will review the agreement once again when we receive notice from Trillium and make any minor revisions or additions at that time. We will then review it on an annual basis (at our January meetings), or make revisions whenever the need

arises in the interim, simply by putting this on the agenda for our bi-weekly meetings. This agreement will be revisited at the end of the three-year project date, December, 2015, when we decide which direction our collaboration will take at that time.

Decision-making process

All decisions will be made by majority vote after considerable attempts at consensus are made. Should a conflict arise that is not easily resolved, the individual responsible for the area in question must attempt to resolve the conflict and achieve consensus. If, in the rare circumstance that resolution or consensus is not possible, the following individuals will have the final say, depending on the issue:

- Human Resources: Marie Zimmerman
- Finances: Catrina von Radecki
- Operations: Julie Hastings
- Risk management: Marie Zimmerman
- Fundraising: Catrina von Radecki
- Marketing: Marie Zimmerman & Carolyn Meili

Each project member will be responsible for discussing the project with their own Festival's Board of Directors, and to ensure approval on issues such as budget, artistic choices, fundraising/grant plans, partnerships, and overall direction the project will take.

Individual Festivals will engage in their own sponsorship/fundraising efforts to support any additional Guelph Fab 5 expenses and project fees needed. Supporters will be acknowledged within the specific area of the host festival's promo material. Each festival will promote her/his sponsors in whatever way they see fit in their own marketing materials.

How the collaborative group's funds will be managed

As the lead applicant, Guelph Contemporary Dance Festival will set up a separate Guelph Fab 5 account through which we will run all project revenues and expenses. The GCDF's Board of Directors has approved the application of this grant and the proposed budget. Any further budget decisions for specific project expenses will be made by the Fab 5 members and not by the GCDF Board of Directors.

The Guelph Contemporary Dance Festival was designated the lead applicant at our meeting on September 21st. All five project members attended this meeting.

Roles and responsibilities of collaborative members

Project members will be expected to

- attend bi-weekly meetings with Fab 5 project members
- attend meetings with partner organizations, Guelph Tourism and Downtown Guelph Business Association
- attend special meetings with other arts organizations as further partnership opportunities arise
- brainstorm and plan co-production ideas
- work with festival staff to ensure curation
- attend Fab 5 events and publicly support each festival
- be the spokesperson for the event in which they are acting as guests
- seek additional funder or sponsor support to assist with the expenses of the special projects and to ensure continuity of the project into the future.
- compile audience statistics and evaluations for reporting to Trillium

Special Roles:

Catrina von Radecki: Oversee Management of the project and all reporting to Trillium

Marie Zimmerman: Spokesperson and Publicity

Carolyn Meili: Secretary; take minutes, arrange meetings, etc.

Julie Hastings: Point of contact for preplanning of logistics and operations

Peter Grimaldi: Artist and Sponsor Hospitality

Signed:

Catrina von Radecki,
Guelph Contemporary Dance Festival

Date

Marie Zimmerman, Hillside Festival

Date

Julie Hastings, Guelph Jazz Festival

Date

Carolyn Meili, Festival of Moving Media
(Guelph Film Festival)

Date

Peter Grimaldi, Eden Mills Writers' Festival

Date