

## **Cultural Grant Reconsideration Requests 2003**

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**Absolut Theatre Company**

**Eastside Culture Crawl Society**

**Office of Cultural Affairs  
City of Vancouver**

**Absolut Theatre Company (under auspices of Theatre Terrific)**

**Grant Request: \$ 5,200**

**Original Staff Recommendation: \$0**

**Original Staff Comment:**

“Staff recognize the social relevance of this emerging group’s work and are impressed with its ability to reach audiences across the GVRD. Given the limited time that the group has been active in Vancouver, an evaluation of its work in the context of the work of other applicants in this very competitive round has not been possible. No grant is recommended at this time.”

**Applicant’s Basis for Requesting Reconsideration:**

The applicant’s letter does not identify eligible grounds for reconsideration as outlined in Council policy. (See applicant’s letter following.)

**Results of Staff Reconsideration:**

In the reconsideration process, a staff committee reviewed the applicant’s original application and reconsideration letter. Although the applicant’s letter did not identify eligible grounds for reconsideration as outlined in Council policy, the staff committee met with the organization’s Artistic Director, a Board Member and the Executive Director from Theatre Terrific, the society sponsoring Absolut Theatre’s application. The purpose of the meeting was to clarify points raised in the request for reconsideration letter and not intended to revisit questions of evaluation, as this is not part of the reconsideration process.

During the meeting, the two eligible grounds for reconsideration were discussed and compared with the reasons put forward in the applicant’s letter. The applicant stated that they had no concerns regarding the “financial interpretation” grounds for reconsideration.

While grounds relating to eligibility were not identified in the applicant’s letter, eligibility was discussed in the meeting. Absolut Theatre Company applied under the auspices of Theatre Terrific, which is permitted under the Project grant category when an organization has not yet received not-for-profit status. Further, while the company has been active throughout the GVRD since its founding in 1997, the proposed project is to take place in Vancouver and therefore is eligible. As the application had been accepted and duly reviewed, the applicant did not raise further concerns about this premise for reconsideration.

Based on the review of documents and discussion with the applicant, the staff committee concluded that the reconsideration request did not address either of the grounds provided for in this process, and therefore recommends no change to the original grant recommendation.

**Recommendation: No grant.**

**absolut theatre company**  
Suite #1- 246 E.13<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Vancouver, B.C  
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(604) 263-1859  
[www.whoareyoucallingcrazy.com](http://www.whoareyoucallingcrazy.com)

July 8, 2003.

**Re: 2003 Project Grants: June 2<sup>nd</sup> Deadline- Spiraling Within  
Request for Reconsideration**

The absolut theatre company and Theatre Terrific would like to request reconsideration and dispute the staff's recommendation that no grant be approved for our organization on the following grounds:

We believe that the history and reputation of Theatre Terrific and the individual reputations of the artists involved in the project have not been taken into consideration.

Theatre Terrific Society has been working since 1985 to gain public acceptance for people with disabilities by empowering them to participate in Vancouver's theatrical community. Through many productions, classes and workshops, Theatre Terrific is a catalyst for growth and change. We have a vision of inclusion. Theatre is a place where we can celebrate the skills and challenge ourselves to experience something beyond ourselves.

In addition to coordinating six to ten classes a year, an Annual Free Day of Acting Classes and a Summer Camp, we organize fundraisers and readings. We produce two annual newsletters and participate in Transition Fairs and other community events. We have drives for donations (goal to increase to \$5,000 in corporate and \$4,000 in individual donations), membership maintenance (with a goal to increase to 100), volunteer maintenance (goal to increase to 50) and Board Members (goal to increase to 12 directors). We are creating Sponsorship packages for corporate and government funding (target 20 sponsors) and filing applications for foundation funding (target 20 foundations).

The absolut theatre company approached Theatre Terrific and the two organizations have agreed to work together as we both recognize that together we can provide a unique and synergistic collaboration that can enable us to achieve our goals and fulfill our individual mandates. We each bring particular strengths and resources to the table.

In addition, we also believe that the established history and reputation of the independent artists involved in the project are not being considered.

S. Siobhan McCarthy is the Founder and Artistic Director of the absolut theatre company. She is a 1998 graduate of UBC's Honours Theatre BA Programme. Above and beyond her work with the absolut theatre company, she has worked as an independent contract director and actor for Stage Eireann, directing the award winning ***Bold Girls*** at The Havana (2000). She also worked for Prospectus Theatre directing a Wiccan ***MacBeth*** at SPEC and The Arts Club Revue (1999-2000). Siobhan has performed with Wonax Theatre Company at the Blinding Light, and The Havana and with United Players. She has worked on numerous independent films in Vancouver and is an active member of Women in Film and Video Vancouver.

Sheena Ross, although only in town for a few years, is an Artist in Residence in the Vancouver Schools and has designed numerous shows for schools and companies such as Applause Concert, Urban Spine, Sea Theatre, Origins Theatre and absolut theatre company. She is also the Stage/Tour Manager for The Vancouver Chamber Choir.

David McLeod has a long history of acting in Vancouver. He has graced the stages of the Arts Club and Station Street before focusing on his film career.

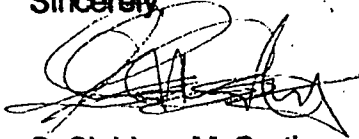
Mercedes Baines is the Artistic Director of La Luna Productions and has been an active independent artist in Vancouver for many years. She has worked with Public Dreams, Theatrix, Backstage, The Arts Club, Vancouver Youth Theatre, Arts Umbrella, View Festival, Rumble Theatre, Ruby Slippers, Vancouver Playhouse, Vancouver School Board, Firehall Arts Centre and Tahmahnous Theatre.

We would request that you please review our application, taking into consideration the history of our partner (Theatre Terrific) and the individual artists involved in the project.

We are re-submitting our archival tape from our workshop production of, ***Spiraling Within*** so that you may further "evaluate our work." We have also included audience feedback and quotes to aide in this difficult process.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



S. Siobhan McCarthy  
Artistic Director- absolut theatre company  
(604) 263-1859  
[www.whoareyoucallingcrazy.com](http://www.whoareyoucallingcrazy.com)



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HEALTH ASSOCIATION  
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE  
POUR LA SANTÉ MENTALE



**For Immediate Release:**

APPENDIX A  
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**absolut theatre company**  
presents:

# ***SPIRALING WITHIN***

**Commissioned by the Canadian Mental Health Association**

**At the Victoria Fringe Festival August 23 - September 2, 2003!**

**Call the Fringe Hotline at (250) 383-2663 or visit [www.intrepidtheatre.com](http://www.intrepidtheatre.com)**

**for tickets and festival information.**

**[www.whoareyoucallingcrazy.com](http://www.whoareyoucallingcrazy.com)**

***Spiraling Within* is an odyssey into the mind of a young woman.**

**Kayla "pops" her pills of choice and "trips" through bus rides, raves and psych wards.**

Written and performed by **S. Siobhan McCarthy**, ***Spiraling Within*** is a bold, innovative multi-media one-woman show that combines statistics, dance, movement and darkly humored scenes to explore mental illness and examine the system from the inside out.

"Phenomenal performance delving into the darkness/light of the human mayhem they call "sanity"  
**Nic Hughes Neo-Classic Pictures**

The play explores the issues that surround Depression, Anxiety, Bi-Polar Disorder, Psychosis and the ways in which these are dealt with by society, families and individuals. Adapted from the enormously successful, ***Who Are You Calling Crazy!?!***, ***Spiraling Within*** guarantees to stimulate, educate and entertain both youth and adults alike.

## **REVIEWS**

"proof that live theatre lacks no courage when tackling tough issues" - Peter Birnie, **The Vancouver Sun**

"reads like a Generation Y diary- it's honest and highly emotive with lonely poetry,...so authentic is this "just say no" show, it may be the "tween" pick of the Fringe."-Kendra Fanconni, **The Georgia Straight**

"S. Siobhan McCarthy is one mean scriptwriter. She manages to tackle a difficult topic- mental illness with boldness, sensitivity, and poignancy." -Fara Tabatabai, **The Ubysey**

"The writing was top-notch and the use of multi-media greatly enhanced a stellar one-woman performance. I highly recommend "Spiraling Within" for consumers, non-consumers, youth, service providers and anybody who just likes a great piece of theatre." April Porter- **Community Rehabilitation Worker**

"Her powerful and poetic images succeed where words alone cannot express heightened states of consciousness." **Kagan Goh / filmmaker**

"this was an awesome play, very deep, teaching, feeling and emotional. This is very much needed to reach all of our young people! Thank you!" **Christel Meyer**

**Media Contact: S. Siobhan McCarthy (604)263-1859 or (604) 842-6663 (cell phone)**

## **Audience Feedback for the *Spiraling Within* Workshop Performance**

"Not since Tennessee Williams' Streetcar Named Desire and his beautiful fragile character, Blanche Dubois, have I experienced a more moving, powerful, brave and compassionate depiction of mental illness." **Kim Seary**

Dear Colleagues,

I went to the opening of Siobhan McCarthy's "***Spiraling Within***" last night at Gallery Gachet. The writing was top-notch and the use of multi-media greatly enhanced a stellar one-woman performance. In addition my friend, who has no personal knowledge of mental illness, felt that he was really given an opportunity to experience what it might be like to have depression, mania & psychosis.

I highly recommend "Spiraling Within" for consumers, non-consumers, youth, service providers and anybody who just likes a great piece of theatre.

This is a totally unsolicited recommendation, by the way.... just wanted to say 'Brava' to Siobhan and urge folks to support the play.

**April Porter**

**Co-Coordinator Supported Volunteer Program CMHA V/B,  
Recipient of the 1999 Coast Courage to Come Back Award  
Community Rehabilitation Worker (Mental Health)**

"Your workshop provided an excellent forum for us to ask questions and voice opinions. We believe that your work must be seen by a much wider audience and in several mainstream locations including schools and public theatres." **Louisa Russell, Gallery Gachet**

The show you put on was incredible. I found that you really took the one woman show to a whole new level with the use of all the multi-media. It made it compelling and interesting to watch. Just wanted to let you know once again. Keep it going.

**Cynnamon Schreinert**

"I was mesmerized! This play brought to light so many behaviour patters that I've seen people I love and myself display in shades of Grey. Thank you!" **Scott Bondy Neo-Classic Pictures**

"very courageous and intimate. Thank you for sharing your gift to fight the stigma." **Karen Labine  
- Mental Health Worker**

"I loved the multi-media aspect. Siobhan was terrific!" **Katherine Surrige Tideline Productions**

"very inspirational, very engaging and entertaining piece." **Stephanie Llowellyn**

"Oh my, that was really incredible! I loved it. I am so glad that I came because I have been experiencing some of those symptoms due to quitting drugs and alcohol and it was so amazing to learn about those diseases. Thank you so much and good luck."

**Eastside Culture Crawl Society**

**Grant Request: \$ 6,500**

**Original Staff Recommendation: \$0**

**Original Staff Comment:**

“This open-studio event has been operating successfully since 1997 on a combination of earned revenues and donations. A first-time grant toward publicity and outreach of this neighbourhood art tour would represent a new direction for the Project grant program. Given the number of competing requests and the limited grant funds available in this round a grant is not recommended at this time.”

**Applicant’s Basis for Requesting Reconsideration:**

The applicant has requested reconsideration on both premises outlined in the Council policy: (1) eligibility criteria have not been properly applied; and (2) the applicant’s financial situation has not been accurately assessed. (See applicant’s letter following.)

**Results of Staff Reconsideration:**

A staff committee reviewed the applicant’s original application and reconsideration letter, and then met with the organization’s coordinator. The organization is evolving from a studio open house concept to more of a community/neighbourhood festival format, so its eligibility for specific grant categories was a challenge for the committee to review. The committee determined that the organization does not meet all of the eligibility criteria for the Project grant category, including requirements pertaining to professional artistic leadership and payment of principal artistic contributors.

With regard to the financial grounds for reconsideration, the original staff comment recognizes that it is to the group’s credit that it has diversified revenues. The applicant acknowledged in the meeting that the event will proceed this November, whether or not civic funding is obtained, but may not be sustainable or grow over the long term without additional support.

Staff note that if the Culture Crawl continues to evolve into a larger, more inclusive festival-type event as the organization envisions, the event could be eligible under the Celebration grants category. The next deadline for application to the Celebration grants program is September 15, and although timing is tight, it is anticipated that the group would be advised of the results in early November, which would be prior to the event taking place.

In conclusion, the staff committee is not recommending any change to the original recommendation in the Project grant category, but suggests that, depending on how the event evolves, the group consider applying to the Celebration grants program in September.

**Recommendation: No grant.**

APPENDIX A  
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# Eastside Culture Crawl

800 Keefer Street

Vancouver

British Columbia

V6A 1K7

July 14, 2003

Office of Cultural Affairs  
City of Vancouver  
Suite 100 – 515 West 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Vancouver, BC  
V5Z 4A8

Re: **2003 Project Grants  
Eastside Culture Crawl**

Thank you for your letter of June 30<sup>th</sup>. While we recognize that there is a higher demand for funding from the OCA than there are resources available, our Society is quite disappointed that our application was not one of those recommended for funding. We are requesting reconsideration based on both premises outlined in your *Request for Reconsideration Process*, namely: A. Eligibility criteria have not been properly applied, and; B. Financial information from the applicant has not been accurately assessed.

In your letter you state that "A first-time grant toward publicity and outreach of this neighbourhood art tour would represent a new direction for the Project grant program". We are at a loss as to how our request would be a new direction. We have reviewed the *Instructions for Applicants* and feel that the Eastside Culture Crawl is ideally suited to the City's eligibility requirements. In fact our application is for funding of activities which address a broader range of encouraged activities outlined in your criteria. If the information contained in our application implied ineligibility we would welcome the opportunity to discuss this.

In your letter you also state that "This open-studio event has been operating successfully since 1997 on a combination of earned revenues and donations." The Crawl has indeed been operating successfully since 1997 without any government funding. We have relied on member fees, fundraising activities through both the attending public and the business community, and mostly through the tremendous volunteer activities of our board and participating artists. The Crawl started as an open-studio event but due to an increasing public interest it has evolved into a community arts festival. This evolution is still proceeding and the Crawl needs to either meet this growing demand or risk frustrating and disappointing many of the attending public, our member-artists, and the arts community.

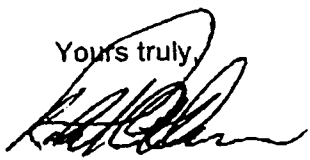
The Eastside Culture Crawl is at a crossroad. Each year we attempt to improve upon the previous one by addressing comments and concerns raised by our member-artists and the attending public while at the same time attempting to control our growth and to remain inclusive and barrier-free. While the funding requested in our grant application is for new budget line items, in the past these activities have been undertaken on a volunteer basis. The community demand for expanded activities and services have



brought the Crawl to a point whereby we do not have the volunteer resources to address the demands and we will have great difficulty operating without funding for these activities. Our application requests \$1,500 for neighbourhood guides which is in direct response to feedback from the public. These neighbourhood guides would improve upon our communication with the public while at the same time strengthening the link between our arts festival and our geographic community. We have also requested \$3,000 for a publicity coordinator. The demands from media outlets for tours, interviews, and information has grown each year and in 2002 our coordinators took more than a combined month of personal vacation time just to address the media requests. We can no longer rely on volunteers to meet our publicity needs and failure to address media requests will result in the loss of much of the free publicity upon which we rely. Our final request was for \$2,000 for an outreach coordinator. While the Crawl does have a broad range or cultural and community representation, we do not feel that we are truly representative of the diversity of the arts in our community and we must address this shortcoming. As noted above our volunteer resources are already stretched to the limit with an extreme low-ball estimate of 2,000 hours of volunteer effort per year.

The above paragraph may go beyond the level of detail expected in the normal Request for Reconsideration Process, however, we are attempting to demonstrate that the financial information contained in our application may not have been accurately assessed for we can no longer continue to operate successfully without new funding. The Crawl must expand to meet a growing public demand and our grant application to the OCA is a partial attempt to meet a portion of this demand. We are also seeking funding for paid administrative staff through other grant programs. Unlike most other arts festivals, the Crawl receives no funding from any government source even though this arts festival now attracts 6-7,000 people per year.

As noted in the opening paragraph in this letter, we recognize that funding requests to the OCA go beyond the dollars available under the program. We also recognize that there are many deserving arts organizations who need funding from the City. The Eastside Culture Crawl would eventually like to qualify for an annual operating grant from the City but as outlined in the eligibility criteria we can not do so without first qualifying and successfully completing the Project Grant stage. We feel that the application submitted on June 2<sup>nd</sup> demonstrates our applicability to the eligibility criteria. We also feel that we have demonstrated a dire financial need to meet a growing demand and that an assessment of our financial information would show this to be the case. Please reconsider our application. We welcome any opportunity to provide you with further clarification or information to demonstrate our eligibility and need.

Yours truly,  
  
Robert O'Dea  
Co-ordinator  
Eastside Culture Crawl