



## Creative Champions Network Webinar – May 17, 2021

### Are You The Boss Of Me? One Mission, Two Roles

#### Speakers:

**Jaclyn Rodrigues**, Community Engagement Manager, Toronto Arts Foundation

**Jini Stolk**, Toronto Arts Foundation Research Fellow

**Susan Crocker**, recent past Chair of the Toronto Arts Council and former Chair of the Toronto Arts Foundation

**Jovanni Sy**, former Artistic Director of Gateway Theatre and Cahoots Theatre

**Vivine Scarlett**, Founder, Executive Director and Curator for *dance* Immersion

*Transcribed through Otter.ai, edited by Alexandra Loewen*

00:00:00 – 00:01:42	Jaclyn Rodrigues	<p>Well welcome, everyone.</p> <p>Good afternoon. From where I'm sitting, it's a beautiful day and I hope the sun is shining where you are. My name is Jaclyn Rodrigues and I'm the Community Engagement Manager with Toronto Arts foundation. We're delighted that you're able to join us today for this webinar. I'll keep my remarks brief as my role here today is mostly as a moderator for our Q &amp; A, and to help troubleshoot any technical issues. As some of you know, the Foundation is hosting this webinar as part of our Creative Champions Network. Jini Stolk, network director encourages those of you who are new to this program to explore our resources and past webinars online. I'll post a link directly in the chat below momentarily. After our introductory remarks, we'll proceed to today's session. If you have a question. For Q &amp; A, please use the Q &amp; A function below, not the chat function as questions tend to get buried there. We ask that if you have a question for a specific presenter that you try to identify them in your question to us. We'll strive to get to as many questions as possible and we'll prioritize most frequently asked questions. Now, while no one requested ASL interpretation for this session we are we are recording it and the recording will be live and a transcription of today's session will be available as soon as possible. Lastly, before I turn it over to Jini, I'd like to thank our donors and sponsors for their generous support of the Foundation and its programs. It's because of them that were able to keep these sessions free for all to attend. And if you donated when you registered for this session, a very special thank you to you too. With that, I'll turn it over to Jini, our Creative Trust Fellow and leader of Creative Champions Network, take it away.</p>
00:01:43 – 00:07:28	Jini Stolk	<p>Thanks so much Jaclyn, and to Alex as well for your invaluable assistance with this webinar and all the rest that we've got up and running over the past year, and especially for your technical expertise,</p>

which helps me and everything run smoothly. And I'm very grateful for that. And thanks, and welcome from me to everyone on today's call. I would say that despite everything I'm lacking many of the basics of strong networking, including wine, cheese and hugs, I think we've managed to maintain a sense of community and sharing among arts board members. And we really truly appreciate your commitment to continued learning about this important work by tuning in to our sessions. We have talked of the past year as a testing ground in which the rubber definitely hit the road. For every arts organization, essential attributes of a good board became really crystal clear, as so many of us work very hard to rise to the challenges that that we're faced with. Now, I think we're at a moment as we're looking at what comes next. We're interested in whether the changes to how boards work, how they think about their work, which were triggered by the pandemic, will continue to hold true and today's session is our ninth webinar since the the start of the pandemic and asks, Who is the boss in an arts organization?

With that question, I think it tackles a perennially vexing topic of what are sometimes unhealthy power dynamics that can pop up between board and staff. They become a frequent source of misunderstandings and tensions where they exist. This hasn't, as things don't, magically gone away over this past year. But the topic, the issue, the question has been highlighted in many discussions that I've had. And we've had, as one of the things we need to work on, on each of our boards, but also, I think within our community as a whole. And I'm not just talking about the arts community, but really all non-profits. I am happy to say that our panels today have thought long and hard and bring significant professional and personal experience to understanding what leadership means in an arts organization, both on the board but also on the management and artistic side. And how to embody that in a way that doesn't reproduce a traditional hierarchical structure that reflects a more creative collaborative decision-making process. I'd like to introduce our distinguished panelists very briefly. Today we have Susan Crocker, one of our most respected arts board leaders, very recent past chair of the Toronto Arts Council, former chair of the Toronto Arts Foundation, co-chair of Nova Scotia's Chester Playhouse and board member for many years of multiple arts organizations welcome Susan. Vivine Scarlett, founder, executive director and curator for over 25 years of *dance* Immersion, an organization that supports dancers and dances of the African diaspora and serendipitously winner last week of the Toronto Arts Awards' Muriel Sherrin Award we're all pleased and delighted for you Vivine. And Giovanni Sy: director, playwright, former artistic director of Gateway Theatre and Cahoots Theatre and a long-time friend, currently taking a bit of a break from full time artwork while studying in a master's program at University of Calgary.

Before we begin today's session, I'd like to invite you to join all of us and acknowledging that we're all whether in Toronto, as many of us are, or in the other places from which people are joining us today, living and working on sacred land, the sight of human activity for over 15,000 years,

		<p>and traditional territory of many Indigenous peoples. And in being mindful that we're only the most recent peoples who have the responsibility to care for and nurture this land. This year, we've been called on not just to honor the traditional lands of the first peoples, but to be an act of solidarity with Indigenous women and men's pursuit of a new and more sustainable future. In today's session, I hope you will also keep in mind that there are many different ways of understanding leadership, and that we have a great deal to learn from Indigenous cultures, spirit, wisdom, and practices. Thank you all.</p> <p>And now to our panelists and to our session, I'm going to ask questions and ask each of the panelists to respond. And I'm going to start with kind of a basic essential. Could you each tell us about a board experience or two where the relationship with board and stuff was notably clear and productive? How did it work? Why did it work? Or perhaps, how would you have liked such relationships to work? I'm going to ask Susan to start this one too.</p>
00:07:29 – 00:07:46	Susan Crocker	<p>Sure. Thank you, Jini. It's a pleasure to be here and welcome everyone who's taking time out of their day to learn together with us. So, experiences that have worked well. You know, I can think of Jini, do you want us to name names or just be theory to you?</p>
00:07:47 – 00:07:52	Jini Stolk	<p>Up to you, If it's a good thing, then go read it.</p>
00:07:53 – 00:10:06	Susan Crocker	<p>So, I can. One board that I'm involved with at this point in Toronto, which I'll mention by name is the Gardner Museum, I'm on that board. And I'd say that is a situation where the leadership is very strong, the communication is very strong, just when you think as a board member, I wonder what we're doing about this. And I wonder where we are on this. And I hope we're taking advantage of these available supports. So, you're worrying about these, because we're all in this intense, I think worrying and high stress mode. What comes back is evidence that management is on it, ahead of it, but is also engaging with the board and not afraid to ask for support and guidance, and so forth. So, sort of seeing that's been, I think, part of a strong culture there for quite some time and effective board management relationship. But in this moment of stress, seeing that, in particular.</p> <p>I also at this point in time, I've been reflecting on organizations I've been involved with, that were under their own unique stress, and either handled it well or didn't handle it well. And what's different today is we're all under stress. You know, it's I think very different to be, you know, the one organization struggling when others are doing well versus being in this collective situation where there is the ability to collaborate across the sector and get support from industry associations and so on. So, I know we'll get to those discussions later. What do we take forward from this moment, there's going there's going to be a great deal because traditionally, organizations under stress have operated in isolation, dealing with that and relying on the relationship with between the board and management, which may or may not have had the foundation to you know, move forward effectively. So, I'd say I'm seeing more strength now</p>

		with organizations I'm working with now in terms of effective board management relationship, then traditionally during the past.
00:10:07 - 00:10:12	Jini Stolk	Very interesting, who wants to go next?
00:10:13 – 00:11:36	Jovanni Sy	I can, I can jump in. just reflecting on my time as artistic director of Cahoots Theatre, there was a point where we were, we were quite interested, as the Wychwood Barns project was opening with Artscape, of becoming one of the, you know, significant tenants along with Theatre Direct, and we, we had an opportunity to take one of their very substantial spaces, just as it was opening, and I was really gung ho about it, as you can expect from being from the artistic side. It was really our board and having these thoughtful, dispassionate conversations about the pros and cons about a really frank assessment of where we were where we wanted to be, we opted not to go there. And that was a fantastic decision. You know, it disappointed me at the time. But in hindsight, I can say it was absolutely the right decision. I think that's a great example of a board and management looking at common values and aspirations and just being very analytical about where an organization is in its lifecycle. So that was an example of a great decision that was made with board and staff working in tandem.
00:11:37 – 00:11:51	Jini Stolk	Excellent. Yeah, very good. Vivine, unmute! Thank you, Jovanni. Vivine, did you want to...?
00:11:52 – 00:13:04	Vivine Scarlett	Yeah, sure, share with our board and <i>dance</i> Immersion. I'm really driven by the artistic part of it. And when we had to host the International Association of Blacks in Dance for the first time, which is a huge undertaking for our organization. At the time, it really became a relationship building between both of us because on the on the artistic side, and we've been there. We knew what had to go on. But the from the board point of view, they had sort of grand ideas, which were great, but wouldn't work for us and where we are. So, we had to come together. And one of the ways we really did, it was really engaging them in what we do so that they can see. So, they're not just a board sitting in the in the board room, but they really came out and volunteered to things to get an idea. And then when we went back to the board room, we could have a more informed discussion about what it is that we were trying to do. So that was one point that really helped where it worked really well.
00:13:05 – 00:14:32	Jini Stolk	Yeah, right. So art at the center, engagement, continuous engagement in the real work, leadership from staff, or at least kind of knowledge that the staff is on top of things that needs to be on top of. And the idea that we're now in a more collaborative world, than we were before, which hopefully is a very good thing to do. All this being said, we can't always assume that everyone who joins a non-profit arts board is on board with a particular way of working. There are definitely different understandings of the role of a board, and how a board should relate to staff leadership. So the question here is, have you been successful in bringing people with different viewpoints together around successful approach or understanding? And if you've experienced being unsuccessful in that pursuit to know it's not, it's not always easy.

		<p>If you could maybe highlight a few of your thoughts and thinking about why that was or how that worked. And who wants to take that? Jovanni, do you do you want to start us off here?</p>
<p>00:14:33 – 00:20:07</p>	<p>Jovanni Sy</p>	<p>Yeah, I've got probably an example I could write a whole book about. During my time at Gateway. And I just wanted to provide a bit of background about Gateway Theatre and the city Richmond, British Columbia, because I know the majority of our attendees are from my hometown of Toronto. So you want to know about Richmond, BC imagine, Markham Ontario and now make it 30% More Chinese. And that's Richmond. Based on the 2016 census 55%, roughly, of Richmond are Chinese of Chinese heritage. So, it's a majority, not just an Asian Canadian Heritage. But Chinese Canadian Heritage, specifically 75% of Richmond are non-white, and 60% of Richmond were not born in Canada, which makes it the city in Canada with the largest immigrant population. So that's, that's your background of, of Richmond, when I stepped into the Gateway Theatre in 2012, despite being in a city with a plurality of Chinese Canadians, about 95% of my audience was white. So, you can imagine how untenable that was, in terms of the, you know, the future security of the company, the longevity of the company, and how that was something that needed to be addressed immediately. And I was pretty well hired with the understanding that this was something that we had a common goal, the board and me, the incoming artistic director, to try to direct us rectify this, you know, gross discrepancy between the way the city looked and the way the Gateway looked. And what's interesting is, although we had a common goal, what I discovered, I think, early in my tenure was that the board and I didn't necessarily have common values about how to address that like, even though I had proposed a certain slate of programming that would encourage Chinese Canadians in Richmond to come to the Gateway and actually use it as a facility.</p> <p>Oh, and this is the other thing I should actually mention about the Gateway that makes it unique, it is as well as being a producing entity, it is a municipal facility. So, imagine, again, for you Torontonians, the Living Arts Center, if the Living Arts Center had a producing wing, that was a member of PACT that received Canada Council operating funding that's Gateway, it's this weird hybrid thing where it's both a community facility that where there's an expectation for it to be available for rent from the community. And it also has a producing entity that I was the artistic director of. So anyway, I had these ideas of the kind of programming that would address it, and I came upon a lot of hesitation, resistance from my board members, because my ideas were what they considered politically difficult. Specifically, before this 50/35 initiative that's now common in Canadian theatre, ie, make 50% of your programming slate written by women, you know, 35%, written by BIPOC authors, I wanted to do that naturally make it an explicit statement, which six or seven years ago was considered exclusionary by my board. In other words, if I do that, it will feel like a quota, any kind of mentoring or play development initiative that was specifically earmarked for Chinese Canadians? Again, my board at</p>

		<p>the time, considered it “No, but then you're shutting out these people.” And that's what I mean about a difference of values, because I wouldn't even categorize what I was doing as trying to promote inclusion, I would go as far as to say, when you have a slate of programming that erases half of your population, that is an exclusionary kind of act. So I wasn't trying to promote inclusion, I was trying to stop what was our historic, discriminatory and exclusionary acts. I didn't say that to the board, of course, but that's how I viewed it. But there was resistance to even do what we now in 2021 consider, you know, perfectly acceptable and smart things to do. But believe it or not, in 2014, there were a lot of roadblocks. So how did I approach it? Well, I had an all-white board. And that clearly also was problematic, given the way the city looked. So we went about basically my General Manager [inaudible] at the time, replacing board members who weren't on not just with the goal of bringing in more Chinese Canadians but the means with you know, that I was interested in pursuing because the board at the time the board that hired me, I think had this goal but had this notion that somehow we could do things exactly the way they were but this nice amiable Chinese Canadian could sell people on it. They thought that the problem was one of sales and marketing as opposed to a really fundamental problem about programming, play development and outreach. So yeah, I had trouble with my board. And the solution was to replace the board.</p>
00:20:08 – 00:20:18	Jini Stolk	Push back. Who next? Susan, would you like to talk?
00:20:19 – 00:23:57	Susan Crocker	<p>Yeah, it's, you know, a lot of this comes down to mean sort of the starting point, recruitment, you know, followed by onboarding, you know, how do those things happen? And are they effective and are our expectations set clearly there. But also, there can be different things inherent in the governance structure of an organization that make both of those complicated. You know, if an organization and some of the larger cultural institutions in the country are in this camp, where there are appointees, a process of appointees, you know, from government, which may be about an indicated interest on the part of the individual, as opposed to, you know, any sort of deeper connection or skill set, but let's just say we're all talking about organizations, where boards supported by management, have the freedom to, you know, identify board members and recruit them, you know, and bring them on board. And then, you know, it always comes down to, you know, I think the fundamentals of education, really understanding and buying into conflict, you know, conflict of interest and, and what that means and how the smallest thing, you know, even an act of generosity on the part of a board member, you know, can represent, you know, conflict. I'll give one crazy little example of a board I was on, you know, well-meaning board member, at an auction for a different organization, ended up with this opportunity to have a private performance by some renowned dancers, and wanting to bring it into another venue as sort of a gift to them. You know, and that's a conflict that interferes with programming, it's naive, but it was really difficult getting that individual to understand why that wasn't acceptable and couldn't be viewed as part of their donation to the organization. So, you know, there's such a need to ensure that people are aligned around the basic principles. And those are clear when someone's brought on board,</p>

		that that conflict is raised. As, as a subject of importance and necessary attention, you know, at the onset of every meeting, you know, if there are issues, there's ways of either confronting them right there, or if that's inappropriate, just take them offline with the right people, and solve the problem right away. And don't let things fester. And I think many of us have been in those situations where, you know, you know something hasn't felt right. And then it starts to take on a life of its own becomes too big. And you can end up in a situation where you lose an otherwise potentially high contributing board member, you know, because of a mis misunderstanding. Or you have, you know, management losing confidence in the role that the board can play, which is equally damaging. So, communication, getting on it. Educating, onboarding, dealing with a situation like this, right now: three new board members coming on to the Board of a smaller organization, in this challenging moment, where, who knows what's going to happen [laughs]. And we're, we're deep in the flurry of planning, re planning and plan B. And I'm saying, hold on, we've still got to take a moment and spend some quality time with these three new recruits, and make sure that they understand and are comfortable with the fundamentals of the business model, what it is we're trying to achieve, even before we start layering the consequences of pandemic on that.
00:23:58 – 00:24:42	Jini Stolk	So true. Well, I, what you said, leads me to a follow up question, but I'm going to ask that after we hear from Vivine. And I should say that any of you if you have follow up comments that you'd like to speak to something that your fellow panelists have said just go like this and all integrated into our discussion. So Vivine, the difficulties of getting people with differing perspectives and different experiences of boards, pulling together to work in a way that works for your organization.
00:23:43 – 00:26:15	Vivine Scarlett	Yeah, recruitment of board members for our small organization, which was artist run, was we put a board together because it was part of the structure that we needed to do what we had to do so as an office, So I didn't really know what a board was supposed to do. So recruiting members, you find people who would come in who are usually your friends at the beginning or the or, or people you may know who knew somebody, but you got in there, we all got into a room, they looked at me, I looked at them [shrugs]. So, it's been years of learning what to do, which was really quite good, because it became that relationship building that you want. And in terms of recruiting other board members, it is a method of really getting to understand the foundation of the organization. And as we move along, finding those people with the expertise for us, in terms of what it is that our organization needs at the time, and how they can help bringing in people to help and this is the whole discussion of today, who's the boss? Because there has to be a perfect, not a perfect, yes, there has to be a balance, period. Of, you know, expertise of what's going on and the artistic vision of the organization.
00:26:16 – 00:27:04	Jini Stolk	Very well said. My little follow up to something, Susan said that you've all kind of touched on this, I think in in various ways. How important is it? Because I'm on the Governance Committee of an organization. I'm I love it, I'm governance, I don't know, dork. But how important is it to capture the understandings, the processes, the way decisions are made people's

		different roles in writing, and bring them to the board for discussion and approval? It was what you said, Susan, that sparked that, so why don't you start off.
00:27:05 – 00:28:57	Susan Crocker	You know, I think even the smallest organization, it needs to be clear what the mandates are of committees, and what you know, the role is, of, you know, management versus board. So, role descriptions matter. I mean, people aren't going to refer to them constantly. But just to have the opportunity to see that, understand that. With my three new board members that was referencing, you know, we've sort of established and talked to them about what committees they're interested in, where they can lend the most support, they've been provided with an updated mandate, which is written in plain English. You know, that creates a good a good framework for, you know, guiding the conversation about at their first meeting at those committees, and then people are off and running and have some parameters. So I think there's got to be a degree of documentation. And, you know, on the other hand, you know, boards have to be very careful, and, and walk a line when they're involved with a smaller organization about burdening, you know, management with process and documentation. There is a time for documentation and there's a time for judgment and fast action. But the right answer is usually somewhere in between. And again, board members need to get on side with that as well. Like, you know, like, this isn't the right time to rewrite the entire policy manual for the organization in the middle of a pandemic while you're trying to do your 15th reopening plan. Right? And you may have someone who's still thinking, Well, I'm not happy and I'm uncomfortable until I see that we've got an updated policy manual. Well, you just judgment, good governance, and at least plain English definition.
00:28:58 – 00:30:17	Jini Stolk	Agreed. Any further thoughts there? I shall move on. I agree. You're a woman after my own heart. Okay, so Well, I have another questions, but let me put this one out there. We have talked about it. People have brought it up the role of the executive director, the managing director, and the artistic director in creating an environment of mutual support and clear responsibilities. I mean, you know that there are challenges. And there is the rather sticky fact that a board, among its legal responsibilities, has the responsibility for hiring and firing [inaudible] to come back. But still the responsibility from the senior staff about creating Or sorting for top productive relationships? Could we talk about I think we've been? You haven't gone first. So let's have you go first on that one.
00:30:18 – 00:30:45	Vivine Scarlett	the roles of the staff has to have got to be clear as well. And as I'm going to jump back to the question before having things written down, for us is essential. It gives us something to go back to, it's not going to stay the same it ships. So you need something to go on. With, I think I've forgotten the question, sorry [laughs]. [Jini repeats questions]
00:30:46 – 00:32:14	Vivine Scarlett	Just ongoing, working together in terms of building, I'm not only the artistic, and I'm always coming from the artistic view of the organization. But how that develops and grows organically with what has to be done. There has to be a foundation because that is what guides the organization forward. So in in building these roles and relationships

		between the board and the, the artists or the staff has got to be really organic and in terms of what it is you want to bring forward, that advances the organization. Because that's why the board is there, as well as you're all there together because of the organization. Yes, and the art of the organization. Not I mean, it sounds good when I say it, and it sounds good when you write it down on paper, but it really is a challenging thing [laughs].
00:32:15 – 00:32:19	Jini Stolk	If it's ongoing, isn't it? [Vivine: it sure is]. So Giovanni, do you have something to add to that?
00:32:24 – 00:35:19	Jovanni Sy	Think I had the real bad one on one of the big learning. The big lessons for me was going from artistic directorship of Cahoots, which was a small venue plus, in the company, budget around 300,000, at the time, and the board was about five to seven at any given time. And there was a real hands-on operational approach so that if there was a fundraiser, board meetings would actually be talking about who was doing what, and there was often artists representation on the board. So, if I had a new initiative, I could actually float it out at a board meeting to sound out people. And then you go to a place like Gateway, which is a midsize regional, you know, so it's got 30 employees instead of 1.5. And the budget's 2.5 million, and the board member, the board, now you have a board of about 14, and it's not operational at all, I mean, you don't want it to be. So what I mean in the sense of, because people are coming in from places where they don't really understand either the not for profit sector or the art sector. They're saying, Well, why don't you try this? And it's like, you know, we, we don't want you to say, why don't you try this at a board meeting, we want to a much different function from a governing board than we want from an operational kind of board. So my lesson was about board management, and how do we get the board to bring their specific skills that they're very, very good at, and to leverage them to the, to the company's benefit to all pursue our common goal. So I mean, as a municipal facility, a lot of what we had to do had to do with the relationships with City Council. So if we had board members who had very good personal relationships, we would encourage them to message the messages that would help us in terms of future budgets in terms of how zoning and allocation work, because that's something our board was fantastic at. Them suggesting that we do this musical they just saw, you know, last year in London, that's not a useful kind of thing, because they don't really understand a lot of what it takes to produce shows. I mean, we love the enthusiasm, but the board management was about how do we, we meaning the executive director and I spend our time and I mean, I was shocked at how much time was spent on board management because that wasn't the case at Cahoots but at Gateway, it was about sitting down individually with board members, or getting them in strategic clusters to try to get them activated to do the things they were good at, and dissuade them from not doing the things they were less good at.
00:35:20 – 00:35:43	Jini Stolk	So that's pretty clear. So also the board's role and advocacy can be incredibly, incredibly important supportive resource to build. And so thank you for that Jovanni. So Susan, on that topic, role of the Ed, Managing Director, artistic director, and creating that productive environment?

00:35:44 – 00:39:01		<p>As Jovanni was just saying, you know, you were talking about how do we get them focused on what we want them to do, and where they can add value and, and not be involved in other areas. At the same time, it's got to be interesting for the board. And, you know, all of the organizations represented here today have something exciting that they do their mission and that mission that attracts, you know, I hope it's that mission that's attracted individuals to be on the board, whether or not they know a lot about it, they might just have been to a few plays and love that they might, and then bring other skills that that you believe, you know, they can leverage. But, you know, we need to always think about how do we connect them strongly to the mission, increase their passion around that, but also help inform it? So they understand what it means what does this take, you know, really let them leave three years or so on your board, able to speak relatively, you know, confidently about what does it take to do this, you know, sort of appreciation, you know, Vivine, you talked about that with sort of how you brought your board into the room and affect to really understand what was involved. Because if the board comes to meetings, and the programming discussion is the smallest part of the meeting, and everything else is about the hassles and the challenges of admin, fundraising, and everything else, which must be done, then it's out of balance. And it's really easy to lose people in the process. So I just, I always say to boards I'm involved in, find a way bring the art into every board meeting. And also make sure that board members, if you have a larger board with number of committees, make sure that everybody gets the opportunity to have some exposure to if it's programming or curatorial, or just to understand at its heart what it is, you know, we're trying to do.</p>
00:39:02 – 00:40:26	Jini Stolk	<p>So I think that is a responsibility of the ED now I'll answer your question with the artistic director as well. So, interestingly, at one of our previous sessions, Creative Champions sessions, a number of years ago, we were still in person in real life, at a certain point during the discussion that I asked everybody to just stop and turn to the person who was close to them, and spend a few minutes telling them about the organization whose board they were on. And then the other person sharing that that, and I knew that would work. That would be kind of an interesting thing, but I didn't really realize it. Everybody would say that that was the best part of the session the part that they like most, which was I thought, very, very good, something. I should do that all the time. Okay, so I'm just a tiny little thing that I read recently, somebody saying that the executive director is at the center of the board success, even though working with your boards is tough. And that governance is a world of strange loops and tangled hierarchies. Your board depends on you, even if it never says so directly. I thought that was kind of lovely. Okay, with all of this agreement, and the sense of common cause and understanding of mission and commitment to be Are we still want to be sure that new ideas are encouraged that we're not just resting upon a set of agreements and understandings that has existed for a while, but the new ideas that</p>

		<p>challenges to accepted understandings are allowed and vigorous discussion is possible.</p> <p>So how do we ensure that we don't kind of become comfortable with, with the way things have always worked? And keep the freshness and the ability to speak out? front and center around our board tables? Vivine you were nodding?</p>
00:40:27 – 00:42:20	Vivine Scarlett	<p>Yeah, these times a perfect example for us, we have to shift, we have no choice. So right now, especially with the board, they have really jumped out at the beginning of the pandemic, I was unable to get back to Canada, I was in Ghana. So being that far away, I wasn't here. I mean, yes, online and stuff like that. But I was really quite happy that the board members jumped in and worked with..oh, also, the program director at the time had she had left, she had just left the organization. So, I had gone to Ghana and just to get some, let me breathe before I go back and tackle everything. So it was the board jumped in and did what they had to do to support me. And I worked with them letting them know, they knew some things, but we had to get that done. So, geez I go on, and I forget what the question is [laughs].</p> <p>So the change, right, you know, we can't do anything that we used to do before. So, it was really a coming together to figure out what that is, what the new direction is. And that shifts a lot of things that we really, both of us have to work through. So it's, you know, it's really interesting and having that board, and not only did they jump in, it's become more of ownership for them in in seeking that expertise that we need at the time on the board and for the organization. So change at this time with our board has really worked for us.</p>
00:42:21 – 00:42:31	Jini Stolk	<p>So it's affected board recruitment policies and activities as well. Board recruitment as well as everything else. It's changed.</p>
00:42:32 – 00:42:30	Vivine Scarlett	<p>Yes. And and I think a deeper understanding of where the what the organization does its role in community, and how to move forward or need a little bit better. So, we can have that discussion on how to move forward. Right. So who wants to go next? Susan, a few words?</p>
00:42:59 – 00:44:21	Susan Crcoker	<p>Sure. You know, the, I mean, if we stand still, and we're static, we're always going to be at risk. One way that that gets addressed naturally is through replenishment of the board, like through renewal, board renewal. So very, very important. You know, I'm sure in the last year, if any of you have had strong board members, leave your board, you've thought, Oh, my gosh, how are we going to carry on? And how are we going to recruit anyone in this moment of incredible uncertainty, but at the same time, you've got to allow people to leave and it will, will create opportunity as sort of scary as that might be. Right? But I think I think that's important, and recognizing that when new board members come on, they are going to bring new ideas, you know, back to our earlier discussion, we make sure there's been that, that real sincere effort add to helping them understand what they're walking into how they can be most helpful, you know, parameters, roles and responsibilities, but then make sure we're listening to them and hearing from them, because they're the objective</p>

		<p>one in the room, you know, for a period of time, and we can benefit from that. Like they might go, oh my gosh, you know, you're just you just keep going on about the same three things every meeting, go for closure, you know, and we are here.</p>
00:44:22 – 00:44:26	Jini Stolk	<p>Yup, I've seen that one. Jovanni?</p>
00:44:27 – 00:48:42	Jovanni Sy	<p>I want to preface it with just saying how much my huge respect to those of you who are either in on boards or staff at this particular moment, because I left Gateway, you know, a year before the pandemic and honestly, I see what COVID is doing to my colleagues and like, how devastating it is to their well-being and just it's aged them in ways that I'm kind of grateful I'm not running an organization at this particular time. So just kudos to all of you attending And to Susan and Vivine for actually being on the front lines at this particular moment. On the question of change, yeah, I think absolutely Susan's right replenishment is good. I'll talk about it from my perspective, as a former artistic leader. We know we tend to put people in boards, who bring a skill set. And a perspective that makes them I would say, and this is a gross over generalization, but it makes them more risk averse. And that's sometimes that's a great thing. As I mentioned, like with the Wychwood Barns thing, I'm really glad I had a board whose predisposition was one towards, you know, looking at risk in a way that that was what I would categorize as more risk averse. I think one of the ways we get people on board them to the idea of change, a lot of it has to do with, again, tying back to what Susan said, the artistic leader has to inspire people with the vision, and has to be able to articulate a future that is not necessarily evident to people, because that's the job of being an artistic visionary is to see a future, no one else can see at that particular point, and to just to inspire people by espousing the benefits of this future artistic vision. And then to hear people maybe tried to, you know, do the whole poking and questioning of that, because often, a new artistic vision entails change, which entails risk. One of the ways I was really successful, I think, in getting board members to maybe see the possibility of change was to present it as a bit of a challenge. And one of the ways I think I was able to do that was to maybe speak a language they understood, I remember, when trying to promote some of the ideas I was playing around with Gateway.</p> <p>One of the ways that was helpful was invoking the idea of Moneyball, you know, the Michael Lewis book on, which is the case study of how the Oakland A's succeeded, because we were essentially like the Oakland A's whenever board members would try to say, why are you doing the big musical that is so popular from two seasons ago, I'd have to explain well, because we've got this organization in Vancouver called the Arts Club, that is 7 times our size, and has a subscriber base that is 10 times our size. So, if I own the property to, you know, name, a property, like In The Heights, or whatever. And I have the choice between gateway and art club, I'm always going to go with arts club, because the creators stand to make royalties, you know, 10 times as great as if I give that property to you. So, I had to sort of say, Well, think of us as the Oakland A's and think of the Arts Club as the New York Yankees doesn't mean we can't</p>

		succeed, we just can't succeed playing the game they play. So we have to be really smart about it. And we have to, in Moneyball terms, find those market inefficiencies. And once I think I've branded a way they understood, they could get on board with that, because they could connect to be okay. We need to play with a strategy that works for us. So, I'm going to stop coming to you and saying, why aren't you signing this great player? It's because I just like to say, because we're the Oakland A's, right. So, change can be good, but you just have to, I think get people motivated to look at it as a positive challenge.
00:48:43 – 00:49:11	Jini Stolk	Okay, well, thank you. I really enjoying this conversation. I'm learning a lot and being inspired by people's comments, and, and input. And I definitely do have more questions. But I thought it might be a good moment to ask Jaclyn, if maybe we've got some really interesting things going on with human aid that you could bring forward for the discussion?
00:49:12 – 00:49:33	Jaclyn Rodrigues	Sure, we have a lot of questions. So, here's one that I think many, many think about. How do you go about removing a board member? As you know, as upper management, when you report to the board, and you're accountable to your board?
00:49:34 – 00:50:36	Jovanni Sy	For us, it was through the board chair. And I should also qualify that we couldn't always get rid of or I shouldn't say get rid of we couldn't always if the board members weren't kind of accepted accepting the things we were trying to do and we couldn't onboard them. We would often try to ask them to step down through the board chair but we weren't always successful and sometimes we had to work around board members who had kind of contrary ideas to the direction we had to go. And that was its own challenge. But I would say through the Board Chair, I mean, if the Board Chair is not on board with your vision, God help you. I'd really don't know how to solve that one. Because that that's a tricky one. I don't think you know, if your board chair is not working in step with your vision. I mean, if that had ever been the case, and I couldn't correct it, I probably would have had to have resigned as artistic director, really.
00:50:37 – 00:50:40	Jini Stolk	Further thoughts? That's a good one. Yes Susan.
00:50:41 – 00:52:08	Susan Crocker	You know, this is a tough one. And often the best governance model is one where board member, the term is stated as being X number of years, but renewed annually, you know, so you've got something there. I know, even at the Council, right. And at the Foundation, even though people are on for 3 to 6 years, there is an annual reconfirmation. And so I think having that mechanism, which allows there to be a conversation between that allows the artistic or executive director to provide input on relationship or is there anything, it allows the board chair to have a conversation with each board member as just a check in and then then you've got a framework to have the ugly conversation you might need to have, those can be very, very tough, because quite often, board members, you might have situations where they're part of a social, the same social circle, where they're, I mean, all sorts of personal junk can get in get in the way of taking action. And we all know that, you know, that moment of taking action is the toughest. But once it's over, it's like a big sigh of relief for everybody involved quite often, the individual in

		question, so tough to do must be addressed. The experience of the artistic or executive director is fundamental and has to be part of the process.
00:52:08 – 00:52:27	Jini Stolk	I love that terms set out that renewed and so very, very good way to go about it. Should we move on? Vivine, did you have something? Okay, let's move on. What's our next hard question Jaclyn? [laughs]
00:52:28 – 00:52:40	Jaclyn Rodrigues	The next question is Where? Or how do you draw the line between artistic autonomy and board governance?
00:52:41 – 00:53:36	Jovanni Sy	[False Start] I guess, in our case, there was an understanding that the artistic director chooses the artistic slate. And if you can pass it is really a pass fail. And to us it was like it's like a no confidence vote. If you refuse to pass this slate, then I have no choice but to step down and that never, ever even came close to that. But I think that's really the line itself is your only, you know, you cannot dictate what gets programmed. That's not the role of a board. And it has to be understood. What you can do is refuse to pass a budget. And, you know, which is your right as a board to do if you have serious qualms about the artistic programming, but I think I think that's the line for me.
00:53:37 – 00:53:41	Jini Stolk	Refuse to pass or ask for more information?
00:53:42 – 00:54:19	Jovanni Sy	Again, I don't know. I mean, it never came to that with and I was I've been really lucky to have you know, boards that those suggestions. And I love that, you know, I love the discussion about art. And I love that my board loves theater enough to want to discuss things. But I've never I've never encountered a board member who really insisted upon, you must do this show. You must never do this show. I guess so I guess I'm talking but I'm probably not the best person to answer this question, because I've had collegial board members. Yeah.
00:54:20 – 00:54:23	Jini Stolk	Vivine, did you ever experience this?
00:54:24 – 00:54:41	Vivine Scarlett	I'll agree we have not had that experience? Kind of close to it, but it's been the artistic sort of decision on it. And that's the way it's worked. We haven't had any real problems at all in that way.
00:54:42 – 00:55:13	Jini Stolk	I guess it's the agreement on what the organization is there for and arts organizations always there for the art. So, I think that on the other hand, I can absolutely imagine that there would be circumstances where certain board members might misconstrue or misunderstand...Susan, did you have something to say on that? [shakes head no] Jaclyn, what else?
00:55:14 – 00:55:37	Jaclyn Rodrigues	So this is a question, I think, for anyone. But so regarding orientation of new board members, it seems that most, you know, most do kind of one on one employee, you know, coaching, but do Is there any other strategies or processes that can be used to to onboard new board members, and orient them, [Jini: bring them into the studio, definitely]
00:55:44 – 00:56:32	Vivine Scarlett	Um, one of the things that we do is sort of like an annual, I'm sure everybody does it, as well as what we call an annual retreat will go off to when we used to be able to go off to the Center Island, or it would, I mean, it would be a little bit of business, but it was really more a free up

		sort of thing. And anytime we can interject sort of relationship building, you know, being outside of what it is, you're there as a board member or as a staff member, to really get to know each other a little bit more. Now, the challenges in these times, we're not going to be like this forever, but how to keep that going right now.
00:56:33 – 00:57:45	Jini Stolk	Susan, did you have something [shakes head]? Yeah. The fact that a board needs to work together that each individual board member is not the board the board is when people are coming together, having discussions making decisions together, that's the board working. And it's very difficult to to do effectively. If people don't know each other, I haven't had a treat together around again on wine and cheese. But it's really important way for people to understand and and what to understand how people are thinking how their work, what their concerns really are, when they bring up issues that are important in snow, always easy to to figure that out. At first you have to kind of, I think get to know them a little bit more to know where if they're challenging things with their animals and where that's coming from. Jaclyn, more?
00:57:46 – 00:58:06	Jaclyn Rodrigues	Yep. Here's a timely one. In a pandemic, people's lives are at stake. That outbreak could harm our sector, artists, staff, audiences, patrons, board members must remain safe. How do we cultivate a safe, respectful culture for courageous conversations and good decisions?
00:58:07 – 00:59:30	Susan Crocker	Just do you think is the author talking about? Because there's sort of one dimension to this, which I'm sure we're all working on, or have been working on or have done 10 renditions of which is safe reopening audience care or patron care plans and continuing to refine, be guided by public health, get creative, but be naturally conservative and so forth, then, or is it about how do we cultivate a set safe, respectful culture? You know, is the author asking about how do we recognize that there is a great deal of stress out there? And, you know, the need to even manage sort of boundaries, engagement, as we're, you know, moving into everyone's living rooms and through zoom and thinking that we're all flexible and accessible. But we've still got to be careful, mindful recognize that everyone at an individual level, let alone the collective organizations we're supporting, is dealing with a great deal of change and challenge and uncertainty
00:59:31 – 01:01:25	Jini Stolk	So, I think, I think probably the latter that would be my guess, as you just said, and I think that it requires much more compassion than anybody would have previously been thinking about in terms of the board's role. Executive Directors with young children learning from home Oh my goodness, dogs prancing through the zoom and you know, there's just so much that people are going through while at the same time tried Think hard and fast and creatively about how to make the very happen. It's really been quite something new, we'll all deserve cheers and Pat's on the back when that becomes possible.  So, Jaclyn we're a bit over, but we're going to let you explain. We're going to allow ourselves to go slightly over the witching hour of 2pm, as long as they're really interesting questions, not too much longer. I think

		we've got a hard end at 2:15, if not a little bit earlier. And I want at some point, to get to a question, but not necessarily now. A question about what as a community and non-profit community arts community, what we might be doing together to resolve or reframe this issue this question, you know, who is the who is the boss? Again? I think, you know, to me, that's kind of the wrong question. But it's one that I think the community needs to take up and provide some new thoughts on. But first other questions from the people who are doing it from?
01:01:26 – 01:01:44	Jaclyn Rodrigues	So, in the hierarchy of a small to medium sized arts organization? Is there an order of who is higher on the hierarchy, the artistic director, or the general manager? The artistic vision is central to the art the organization's vision, should it be the artistic director?
01:01:45 – 01:01:56	Jini Stolk	Okay. What do we say, what do we say to that one?
01:01:57 – 01:03:55	Jovanni Sy	I'm a huge fan of the dual report, dual responsibility model. And when it works? Well, it's not. It's not as if there's a separation of, of duties, because you're working towards the same thing. I guess the way I would say it, is this that the way the partnership works well, is that you're working together to making sure that all of how do I put that, that that, that you have all the resources required to cover an artistic vision. In other words, it's one thing for an artistic leader to have a huge expanse of artistic vision, but then you're not going to have the resources to cover that unless something changes. In other words, either you're going to have to amass more resources, through fundraising, through grants through whatever to fulfill that vision, or there's going to be so together, you work to make sure that there's no gap between the vision and the resources, you have to realize the vision, and you're both working towards the same end. In other words, it's not just the executive director's job to amass the resources that's done with the help of the artistic director. And it's not just the artist director's job to try to figure out how to reel. In other words, a good executive director will question the vision to say, okay, I understand the vision. But can we modify this so that it requires fewer resources to be realized? So, but I'm a big fan of the dual model, I think, I think things get thrown out of equilibrium when one role or the other becomes too dominant.
01:03:56 – 01:04:52	Jini Stolk	I wonder if we all recognize how, in fact, it's a very unusual thing to have an organization which has equal leadership are usually expected to equal leadership with different responsibilities, making an order running an organization, making it a success, you don't really find that very much in the corporate world. And you really don't find it very much in other non-profit organizations either. So it is something that we have created for ourselves in the arts world. And it's, you know, I love it. And it's interesting. And, again, another challenge to all of us who are working with situation but they can yield riches.
01:04:53 – 01:06:57	Susan Crocker	Yeah, I think it's, I think it is, it is something that is fluid over time. In all organizations, and it changes, and often, it's a function of the needs of the organization at a point in time, if it's, if it needs to be art dominant, or because it's doing a reset that way, or it needs to be admin dominant, because it's just been through dramatic change or is on a growth trajectory, or a build project or something like that. And then it always

		comes down to the players. You know, I noted with interest that some of the attendees today are Co, co board chairs, co chairs or co whatever, well, I'm one of an organization I'm involved in. And, and it's one of the best situations I've ever been in, like, it's just worked so well, because of the individuals and because of the time we're in, it's almost been like job sharing, although it is two full time jobs. One job, but you know, I've seen organizations where, you know, the, you've got the dog, the dominant senior role is the general, you know, or executive director and others where it's hard, but in the end success comes from the two individuals, finding the balance and understanding how they support each other. Like, you know, don't bring, you know, like, under, you know, the artistic director has to understand, has to be ambitious, must be ambitious, must lead not follow, but also has to know that at some point, there are parameters and limitations. And the general manager or executive director needs to know to let ambition fly and run a bit before trying to rein it in and understand that they're there for care and feeding, you know, to help nurture and support and keep some controls in place. So, it'll come down to the individuals but with some structure.
01:06:58 – 01:07:17	Jini Stolk	Right. Okay, [Jaclyn: can do we want to get to your question?]. Oh, yeah. Is it time over scheduling? Is there one more question from the attendees that we can respond to?
01:07:18 – 01:07:38	Jaclyn Rodrigues	Sure. So this is a question about board engagement. I run a small but national organization, we have effectively held all of our board meetings since last March, virtually. And I'm now starting to think about engaging national representation on our board. I am worried about keeping them engaged, though, when they are geographically far from our headquarters in Toronto, and where we hold most of our events, when that's a thing.
01:07:39 – 01:07:53	Jini Stolk	Again, any thoughts on how to keep them engaged? Vivine, did you have thoughts on that one?
01:07:54 – 01:08:49	Vivine Scarlett	Sure, um, the organization that you're a part of on the board. Not only are you contributing to the organization, but also what it can do within your community, or how those relationships are built, and what you can bring back and forth. How does it relate to your community, although you're on this board, but you live there? What are the synergies, all of this just expanding it to keep them engaged? I'm just relating it to where they are, what they do, what happens in their community, what can change, engaging in a way that not only being on your board, is what you're contributing, but what you're also contributing to where you are at the time.
01:08:50 – 01:09:31	Susan Crocker	You know, what you're getting at Vivine, is really, there must be a purpose, you know, if someone's coming on joining your board, nationally, because there is this opportunity now using technology and otherwise, there still has to be that purpose, because there's a reason to bring the mission of that organization into that community are connected. Maybe it's because the philanthropy supporting the organization can and should be national, because of the nature of the mandate of the company. So just have a good reason. Otherwise, it will be difficult to sustain.

01:09:32 – 01:10:30	Jini Stolk	Absolutely. So, let me just ask the spirit of being overarching questions. I am interested in just a couple of thoughts because we can solve this today. But how can the arts community all of us working together, or indeed working with other non-profit organizations, work to resolve or reframe We've discussed, we've called a sticky issue the question of who is the boss? Is there a boss? And do you think that the past year will lead to an alteration of our understandings of the board's role as we move into the rest of life.
01:10:31 – 01:11:44	Jovanni Sy	Maybe I'll speak to my sector, I would say keep an eye on what the Push Festival in Vancouver is doing. Because they just had, they're undergoing a bit of a reckoning, where they dealt very specifically with this question of who's the boss where a board terminated a leader. And it had a really devastating fallout on the Vancouver community and the performance community across Canada. And as a result of what was just an unfortunate way of handling a bunch of situations, they are doing a big self-examination about the structure of a board, and senior leadership and how they're about to interact. And I just, you know, I'm following it a bit. I know the people involved are incredibly, they're just, they're so smart, they've got so much integrity, and they really want to do a deep dive into what's always been, you know, a tenuous kind of relationship. So, I would say, I'm really interested in using the Push Festival, as a case study for how to go forward.
01:11:45 – 01:12:12	Jini Stolk	Lots of discussion happening in the Vancouver community as part of some of those sessions recently, myself, just out of interest. Any other thoughts there? Just keep talking, bring up new ideas. keep the conversation going. I think that's happening. I actually see it happening. So, to me, it feels good.
01:12:13 – 01:12:36	Vivine Scarlett	Yeah. And for me, too, is finding those opportunities that we see at this time, yes, everything is, but there are opportunities to grow and discuss and learn from each other. For me sitting on other boards, I have the opportunity to learn so much. Um, and moving forward.
01:12:37 – 1:14:52	Susan Crocker	You know, this, Jini, you talked about, or I think Jaclyn, or someone did at the beginning, how many of these sessions have been run in the last year. And that, that says a lot that says something about how important it is to connect and not, you know try to solve your problems in a vacuum. And I recall being involved in some of the introductory conversations about the Creative Champions Network years ago. And we said, you know, people come on to arts boards from their everyday life doing whatever else they're doing for their full-time role. And all they know, is what they're told by, what they the only thing might, they might know about the sector, about the business model about financial risks, but anything else is what information comes to them from the executive director, general manager, who may themselves have a limited perspective or may not, you know, be able to sort of understand what a board needs to be effective. And so that was part of the whole reason for the Creative Champions Network is co learning, opening up that conversation, then dial forward to this past year, there has been so much engagement going on, like industry associations, you know, banding together, everywhere, regionally, I know I'm in Nova Scotia, and the artists produce the Atlantic Presenters Association with just being non-

		<p>stop, there's no sort of spin off groups with like venues, trying to problem solve together. So, you know, this is a degree of collaboration that we've never seen, and we will absolutely benefit for its cooperation has stepped well ahead of competition. And, and maybe we can sort of keep that keep that moving. You know, we know that the ultimate competition might be for, you know, for audience members for share of wallet for large donations, but if the missions of every organization are themselves, valid and well communicated and effective, there, there is an audience and there is a donor, you know, for all of us, right? So, we have to keep doing this.</p>
<p>1:14:53 – 1:16:47</p>	<p>Jini Stolk</p>	<p>Really well said and I hate to call him into this session because it's been so absolutely wonderful. I've appreciated it. I've really been excited and inspired. So, thank you, everyone. And I see that a lot of the people who've been on the call are also offering their things to the discussion and the generosity of the sharing. And sadly, we have to say goodbye because we're, we're at that moment. So, thank you, everybody. Truly terrific to have you on the panel. And thanks to everybody who's been with us and listening closely and I hope productively to you saying thank you. Goodbye. Goodbye!</p>