

Mysterious Entity to Pioneer Residency at Market Hall Thanks to OTF Grant

Peterborough - Arts and culture in Peterborough got a welcome boost, thanks to a \$76,500 grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) for a new partnership between the Market Hall Performing Arts Centre and local theatre group, Mysterious Entity, as the groups shared the news today. Jeff Leal, MPP for Peterborough, joined members of the group in a press conference announcing the new grant.

“Our government recognizes the importance of partnerships,” said MPP Leal. “With this grant, the Mysterious Entity and the Market Hall Performing Arts Centre will have the resources they need to develop a strong cultural family within our community and hire the support staff needed to provide the residents of Peterborough with excellent theatre. I look forward to attending future performances in our historic Market Hall Theatre.”

Over the next 18 months, the funding from OTF will support the Market Hall Residency Model Development Project to study and develop possibilities for artist’s residencies at Market Hall. Mysterious Entity will be the Hall’s first resident theatre company, and will serve as a test case for how such relationships could work in the future. Part of the grant has also supported a new staff position to undertake this project at Market Hall, which has been filled by local artist and arts administrator Nadé Nixon.

“This new funding gives us the opportunity to fulfill our physical capacity to act as an arts incubator,” said Director of Development, Karen August. “For the first time we will be in a position to respond to requests for support of artistic creation and honour our obligation to facilitate arts sector development for our community. We are very grateful to OTF for recognizing the importance of this initiative to the long-term health of our local arts community.”

Market Hall Performing Arts Centre is located under the clock tower at the corner of George and Charlotte streets, is not only a Peterborough landmark but also a busy performance venue, with groups such as the Kawartha Jazz Society, Folk Under the Clock, Arbor Theatre and Peterborough New Dance & Public Energy regularly booking the facility for their shows.

“We’ve been building relationships with a variety of arts organizations,” said Market Hall General Manager Bill Kimball. “Until now, however, we’ve never been able to provide the kind of support and nurturing that a formal residency implies. This project will move us towards the kind of sustaining role we’d like to have within Peterborough’s arts community.”

The new partnership will also benefit Mysterious Entity, said the company’s artistic director, Em Glasspool. The seven-year-old company has staged numerous productions locally; including *Macbeth for Six*, *The Vagina Monologues*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, and *Skirting the Edge*. Last fall, the company toured *Skirting the Edge* to the River Run Centre in Guelph. “As a small, locally-based, grassroots theatre company, financial sustainability is always a struggle,” said Glasspool. “Having a formal home and some staff support over the next 18 months will allow us to solidify our audience base and put more energy into our productions.”

Market Hall Performing Arts Centre is a not-for-profit charitable organization that works to develop, nurture and sustain the performing arts in Peterborough's historic Market Hall. As a resident company at the Market Hall, Mysterious Entity will stage two full productions in 2008. *The Black Diamond*, an original script by Glasspool, will run May 14 to 18 at Market Hall. An adaptation of *The Taming of the Shrew* will be presented in November. The company is also working on a production called *The Gender Project*, which will be presented in the spring of 2009.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation is an agency of the Government of Ontario. For over 25 years, it has supported the growth and vitality of communities across the province. OTF continues to strengthen the capacity of the volunteer sector through investments in community-based initiatives. For more information, please visit www.trilliumfoundation.org.

-30-

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