

Money, money, who's got the money?

BY KIRWAN COX

The Factory Theatre Lab in Toronto is a small, experimental theatre which has produced over 100 original Canadian plays in its three years of hazardous existence above a garage on Dupont Street.

While most would be classified as experimental, many have been of outstanding quality. Freeman's Creeps, won the first Chalmers Award and has had successful runs in many cities while **Maybe we could get some Bach** has just opened in New York.

This theatre is on the verge of collapse for the usual reason — no money. Theatre has very high overhead: if you decide not to stage musicals and charge \$10 (and have long runs in thousand seat theatres) you get into trouble. But that is why the Canada Council was set up, wasn't it?

If you look at their 1971 annual report, you realize that the Canada Council is encrusted like an old ship with artistic barnacles from bygone days when Canadian playwrights didn't exist. For example, that year the council gave the St. Lawrence Center theatre group in Toronto \$190,000 to stage Broadway productions; they gave the Neptune Theatre in Halifax \$185,000 for seven shows; and then there is Shakespeare who pulled in a \$410,000 grant at Stratford (which is sanctified by age alone). The Factory Theatre Lab got \$5,000 that year and the other new Toronto theatres like Tarragon and Passe Muraille didn't fare much better.

The next year their grant tripled to \$15,000, but that is still peanuts. The priorities at the Canada Council are upside down. Perhaps the only answer is to declare certain cultural resources like the

Toronto Symphony and Stratford Festival as national historic sites and fund them directly. Leave the problem of deciding what is worthwhile or valuable among the new and innovative to the arts council people who are paid to make those decisions.

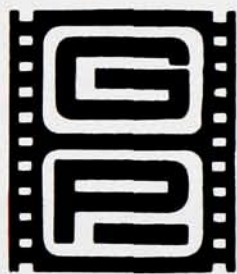
While we're wondering about the Canada Council, let's not forget the large corporations. They have been giving a decreasing amount of collective money to charities (which usually don't include the arts, but go to the United Appeal with its astronomical overhead.) The percentage of money given for "social conscience" causes by all the corporations operating in Canada has gone steadily down from 1.16% of pre-tax profits in 1961 to 0.87% in 1967 to 0.62% in 1971.

Obviously being a "good corporate citizen" is not as high a priority as it used to be. One reason is that during that period many of the largest corporations operating in Canada became non-Canadian. This means the top management in Canada is the middle-management in the world. Therefore, the Canadian president impresses his superiors with profits only. They don't care what was given to help make Canadian society better (or whatever).

Most of the best "corporate citizens" these days happen to be Canadian companies like Distillers-Seagrams or Canadian Breweries Ltd. or Bellevue-Pathé who give in the range of 3-4% of pre-tax profits. Companies like IBM help average that out to 0.62%.

One problem for companies is the amount of effort they must expend to evaluate projects. I would suggest that they give a certain amount each year to the Canada Council or the provincial arts councils (as well as the United Appeal and the Cancer Fund) to be distributed in areas they approve — like the performing arts, or the plastic arts, or groups or individuals, or capital costs, etc.

We cannot afford to have the most innovative organizations in this country (whether in film, theatre, or visual arts) continue to live hand to mouth and be forced to exploit their members with starvation wages. We are all fighting the same battle whether it is in film or theatre or poetry and must support each other.



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per minute, and this little bamboo needle rubs against them and WHOOPEE, we got noises!

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But just stick with me. After all, who brought you electric light on those little wax cylinders?

(MESSAGE)

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