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March 2005

Performing Arts Sector Profile⁽¹⁾ - Argentina



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MARKET OVERVIEW

There is no formal research providing statistics on Argentina's performing arts audiences. However, given the growing numbers of attendees at festivals and the many cultural offerings including theatre and dance, the performing arts sector can be considered vibrant.

The market for performing arts includes productions at public and private theatres. The National Institute for Performing Arts (Instituto Nacional de Teatro [INT]) has registered 108 public and private theatres in Argentina. All major cities in the country have a traditional theatre hall offering performances by touring Argentine and foreign companies.

There are 593 not-for-profit theatre groups, 260 of them subsidized by the INT. There are 2000 not-for-profit performance groups. In Buenos Aires alone, there are at least 100 independent theatrical companies.

There are also museums, art galleries and cultural centres that offer live performances. Foreign-language offerings include those at the cultural centres of Alliance Française, the Goethe Institute and the British Council. Founding countries such as Spain and Italy have a long tradition of participating in Argentine cultural events. Their arts troupes perform through many community institutions, such as clubs, festivals and outdoor events including parades.

Concerning dance, there are official programs for classical dance but also many independent groups of contemporary artistic exploration. In Buenos Aires alone, there are about 50 independent contemporary dance companies.

Argentina has a tradition for state-sponsored culture delivered by cultural institutions at all levels of government. The resulting national, municipal and provincial theatres and art centres have the advantage of being able to offer their performance halls to troupes under special conditions, which generally include automatic inclusion in promotional activities and access to a large audience.

The major facilities among these public institutions are:

- the national opera house, the Teatro Colón. Teatro Colón is a powerhouse of production--indeed, it gives international lyric artists worldwide recognition--and of education, with its school of dance; and
- the Complejo Teatral de Buenos Aires, which includes the city's main theatres, most importantly the Teatro General San Martín (which is in itself a complex institution with performance halls for different art forms), plus cinema and conference facilities and a photo gallery.

In every province, there are similar facilities, on a smaller scale, generally involving both the provincial and main municipality governments. Argentine communities believe in investing in these institutions, which provide a link to the rest of the country and to occasional performances by international artists.

In some major cities, the performance halls are of a quality similar or even superior to many in the central area of Buenos Aires, as is the case with the Auditorium in San Juan on the Andes. This is true now of many places that consider themselves to be "cultural cities," such as Rafaela, in Santa Fe; La Plata; Chaco, in the north; and Córdoba, with its Teatro San Martín.

Other performing arts companies (including circuses, magic shows, puppet theatre, mime shows, musical theatre and opera groups) produce complex productions involving choreographers, dancers, writers, designers, musical groups and performers in a dynamic and relentless scene. The theatre-dance genre--which allows companies to perform without the usual need for language, making this type of art highly suitable for international exchanges--is widespread.

Appreciation of Canadian performing arts in Argentina has been enhanced by Canadian involvement in the design of the Children's Museum of Buenos Aires. The Toronto Children's Own Museum participated in the development of the main theme, the pedagogical content and the basic materials used for the museum's design.

Since the mid-1990s, official festivals have offered a remarkable set of activities that are designed to showcase companies from other countries and to offer Argentinians cultural goods and services. Indeed, the public and private sectors have made consistent efforts to sustain the production of international and national performing arts festivals. The main international events regarding performing arts are held biennially, such as the Buenos Aires International Theatre Festival.

Among the many festivals, two key events have showcased Canadian talent: the Buenos Aires International Theatre Festival and the Córdoba International Theatre Festival.

The Buenos Aires International Theatre Festival is a biennial event for local and international artists and companies. Considered a key venue to promote local stage production to the world, the festival is also a unique and celebrated stage for foreign companies including celebrated international artists to offer their productions to Argentinians and visitors from Latin America. This festival has seen its audience double from 50 000 attendees in 1997 to 100 540 in 2003.

The 1997 and 2001 editions have staged Canadian performers, including Isabelle

Choiniere, presenting *Le Corps indice*, and Les Deux Mondes, presenting *Le Jeu de l'Oie* (directed by Daniel Meilleur, Monique Rioux and Michel Robidoux). Other Canadian companies and performers that have been considered for this festival are The Holy Body Tattoo, Victoria, Robert Le Page, LaLaLa Human Steps, Marie Chouinard, Isabelle Choiniere with a new show, and Denis Merlot with *Les Aveugles*.

Plays/presentations are normally chosen for festivals two years in advance. The Buenos Aires International Theatre Festival offers performers a number of incentives, such as inclusion in press promotions, accommodation and per diems for performers/company members, according to the agreement struck between the Festival and each company.

Canadian companies may have to undertake fundraising efforts, however, as the company's fees are not covered by the festival, nor are translation costs (if there is language involved, the show needs to be translated into or subtitled in Spanish). For performances involving technology, performance space adaptations must be considered. While theatres in Buenos Aires might accommodate high-tech considerations, particularly if adapted to their facilities, less-sophisticated theatres in the country's interior likely can not. Furthermore, the cost of transporting complex technology and stage design from Canada to Argentina must be built into the cost of the event. These costs, borne by the Canadian company, may be prohibitive.

The Córdoba International Theatre Festival, one of the oldest festivals in the country, also takes place every two years. Companies from Canada have regularly performed and been very well received by the public in this city, which has a strong and positive feeling and knowledge of Canada. Canadian companies that have performed here include Isabelle Choiniere and Le Laboratoire Gestuel.

There are an increasing number of international festivals occurring on a yearly basis, including the International Tango Festival, the International Guitar Festival, the International Jazz Festival.⁽²⁾

Children and Youth

ATINA (Asociación de Teatro Independiente para Niños y Adolescentes), a theatre festival for children and youth, is held every two years by the City of Córdoba. This festival draws companies from all over the world, including Montreal's Le Carrousel, which was at the 2004 festival with *L'Ogrelet*.

In Buenos Aires, the biennial ATINA Theatre for Children and Young People Festival was initiated in 2003. Canadian theatre companies Theatre Beyond Words and Le Carrousel participated in the inaugural festival.

International institutions such as the International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People (ASSITEJ, <http://www.assitej.org>) also organizes local international festivals. The last took place in September 2004 in Córdoba, but the site changes.

A growing tendency is to create occasional mega-festivals targeting youth, which involve several art forms.

Tintas Frescas

A new theatre festival will focus on French theatre in translation or subtitled. Tintas Frescas, produced by the Asociación Francesa de Acción Artística (AFAA) and the Buenos Aires International Theatre Festival, will be held November 19-28, 2004 in Buenos Aires. The main sponsors are French companies located in Argentina.

Ballet and Dance

Argentina's major dance festival is the biennial Buenos Aires Dance Festival. Since 2000, the festival has focused on live performances by national and international artists and held seminars and workshops for dancers and choreographers. In 2002, 13 500 people attended; the next festival will probably be held in December, 2006.

The Teatro Colón and the Teatro General San Martín have often been the scene for the Argentine debuts of Canadian dance companies. Some Canadians have even been able to extend their performances into the interior of Argentina and beyond, touring Latin America in general.

OPPORTUNITIES

For the last 15 years, Canadian companies have participated in very different cultural events concerning performing arts, including conferences, museum exhibitions and workshops. This participation has helped to gain recognition for the value of Canadian cultural policies.

Participation in international festivals for live performance arts in Argentina is crucial to gaining access not only to Argentine audiences but also to other markets in Latin America. The presence of performing artists as well as Canadian choreographers, coaches and scene directors will result in a better knowledge of Canadian performing arts. Attending these festivals can therefore promote trade in cultural goods, such as playwrights, music and intellectual property. It can also open a market for the services of stage designers, architects, stage machinery and theatrical technology. There may also be opportunities for services in arts promotion and event management.

Another field that should be explored is performing arts productions held at commercial venues such as art galleries and museums (e.g. gallery nights, museum nights, open studio). Incorporating performing arts in marketing activities, particularly those related to luxury products, is becoming a definite trend in Argentina. Indeed, consumption of luxury products is stimulated by the design of exhibition and performing arts sites at tourism areas in different cities, such as Buenos Aires' Recoleta area.

The City of Buenos Aires is positioning itself as the "cultural capital" of South America. Given the crucial importance the city places on promotion of cultural patronage—including all art forms whether publically or privately funded—the most important contact in Argentina is Buenos Aires' Secretary of Culture. Opportunities include the possibilities to sell rights, licences and theatrical productions and services to the city's many cultural establishments.

Trade Shows

Event/Description	Organizer
Buenos Aires International Theatre Festival November 19-28, 2004 (Biennial)	Secretary of Culture of Buenos Aires Programa Festivales Corrientes 1530, Piso 8, Of. 8 1042 Buenos Aires, Argentina Contact: Graciela Casabé Tel.: (54-11) 4372-0188 Internet: http://www.buenosaires.gov.ar (In Spanish)
International Buenos Aires Dance Festival December 9-19, 2004 (Biennial)	Secretary of Culture of Buenos Aires As above

KEY PARTICIPANTS

While there is no official information about the distribution of interests in the performing arts market, it is important to note that government legislation encourages private-sector participation in public enterprises. Therefore, through sponsorship or promotion, performance events, festivals, concerts and performance competitions are generally the result of public and private investments.

The main public agent promoting public investment in live performances is the INT, which was created by national law in 1997. The INT promotes national theatre, particularly live performances, and pursues international collaborations.

In the City of Buenos Aires, festivals promoted by the Secretary of Culture encourage participation by local and international companies as well.

Some public performing arts schools are key participants. For example, the Teatro Colón, one of largest theatres in Latin America (with 2478 seats and room for 500 standing-room only patrons), has its own ballet company and school of dance. There are also public schools of theatre and dance that are managed by the Secretary of Artistic Teaching (Secretaría de Enseñanza artística), such as the Institute of Theatre for Children Manuel José de Labardén (Instituto de Teatro para Niños Manuel José de Labardén).

The private key participants are companies that produce performing arts, such as Lino Patalano, Carlos Rottemberg, Gerardo Sofovich, Alejandro Romay and José Cibrian.

For the last 15 years, collaborations and co-operation between Canadian and Argentine artists and academics have been promoted by the Cultural Section of the Canadian Embassy in Buenos Aires. In 2004, these activities included the visit of Argentinians to Montreal, to meet with the International Exchange for the Performing Arts in Canada (CINARS). CINARS received the mission of Argentine buyers from November 16 to November 20 to promote Canadian performing arts and theatrical services.

Some of Argentina's most important dance institutions are headed by experts who were trained in Canada. For example, Mauricio Wainrot, who studied in Canada, is the main art regisseur or stage manager of Teatro Colón and is the Artistic Director of the Municipal Ballet of the Teatro General San Martín. Under the influence of such experts, many exchanges have been made and are possible, such as the Argentine tours of Les Ballets, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens and O Vertigo.

Furthermore, there is a regular exchange of dancers and choreographers between Canada and Argentina. For example, Ginette Martin from O Vertigo regularly co-choreographs ballets at the Teatro San Martín.

Over the years, local companies have engaged in producing Canadian plays. These include some on a major scale (e.g. *Tamara*, by John Kryshanc, co-produced by Moses Sznajmer with a local producer), medium scale (*Les Belles Soeurs*, by Michel Tremblay), and the smaller, café-concert format (*La Peau d'Eliza*, by Carole Frechette, and *La Celeste Bicyclette*, by Roch Carrier).

Frequently, Canadians have organized workshops and coaching in the performing arts within international or more specific local venues. To mention a few: Serge Ouaknine and Josette Feral at the Buenos Aires Theater Research International Conference, Fernando de Toro at universities with cultural programmes, Luis Thenon (Laval) promoting the Lantiss New Technologies for Theater with Fundación Telefónica, Laura Taler at the International Videodance Festival, and Suzanne Lebeau at children's theatre venues. There were different types of local financial support for these and many other Canadian performing artists to coach in Argentina.

PRIVATE- AND PUBLIC-SECTOR CUSTOMERS

In addition to the INT and the Buenos Aires Secretary of Culture, a key public player in the market is PRODANZA, a public organization to promote dance production. PRODANZA encourages the creation of independent dance companies in Buenos Aires through subsidizing independent companies and groups, independent associations, theatres, halls and experimental spaces, and dance associations.

In addition, PROTEATRO is a project designed by the City of Buenos Aires to promote the production of traditional and non-traditional theatre houses. In particular, PROTEATRO supports high-tech uptake through subsidies for equipment and theatrical technology.

Other potential customers include the greater Latin American market, which can be accessed through joint ventures with Argentine companies. In order to export elsewhere in Latin America, Canadians should consider offering niche services or goods that are not covered by the big international companies, such as experimental performances.

The General Society of Authors in Argentina is a private institution that deals with intellectual rights. Canadians should contact the society to learn about the possibilities of and rules for selling rights and licences for theatrical and dance performances.

Canadian producers should hire a local agent to facilitate sales. In general, Canadians should consider enlisting legal representation when selling foreign rights to their intellectual property. Concerning performing arts, Indigo Producciones and Alicia Mendez Producciones have already produced successful collaborations with Canadian companies.

Canada and Argentina share three important agreements related to trade and investment: the Canada-Argentina Foreign Investment Protection Agreement (signed in 1991); the Double Taxation Agreement; and the Trade and Investment Co-operation Agreement (TICA, which involves Canada, Argentina and all Mercosur countries). Furthermore, Argentina is also involved in the process for negotiation of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

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Centro Cultural Recoleta

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<http://www.artesur.com/links/recol.htm>
(In Spanish) or
<http://www.centroculturalrecoleta.org>
(In Spanish)

Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes

Avda. del Libertador 1473
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La Scala de San Telmo

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Getino, Octavio. *Las industrias culturales en el Mercosur*. [Cultural Industries in the MERCOSUR.] December 2003.

USEFUL INTERNET SITES

Argentina Business (Fundación Invertir): <http://www.invertir.com>

Canadian Heritage. Trade Routes: <http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/routes>

Centro Cultural Recoleta: <http://www.centroculturalrecoleta.org> (In Spanish)

Cultural Industry Observatory of the City of Buenos Aires:
<http://www.buenosaires.gov.ar/areas/cultura/observatorio> (In Spanish)

Dirección de Enseñanza Artística:
http://www.buenosaires.gov.ar/areas/cultura/ens_artistica (In Spanish)

Dirección General del Libro:
<http://www.buenosaires.gov.ar/areas/cultura/libros/dirlibro.php> (In Spanish)

Dirección General de Museos:

<http://www.buenosaires.gov.ar/areas/cultura/museos> (In Spanish)

Dirección General de Patrimonio:

<http://www.dgpatrimonio.buenosaires.gov.ar> (In Spanish)

ExportSource: <http://exportsource.ca>

Foreign Affairs Canada (FAC): <http://www.fac-aec.gc.ca>

FAC. Latin America and Caribbean Bureau: <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/latinamerica>

InfoExport: <http://www.infoexport.gc.ca>

International Trade Canada (ITCan): <http://www.itcan-cican.gc.ca>

Teatro San Martín: <http://www.teatrosanmartin.com.ar> (In Spanish)

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2. See "Music Sector Profile: Argentina" at <http://www.infoexport.gc.ca> for information about these festivals.

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