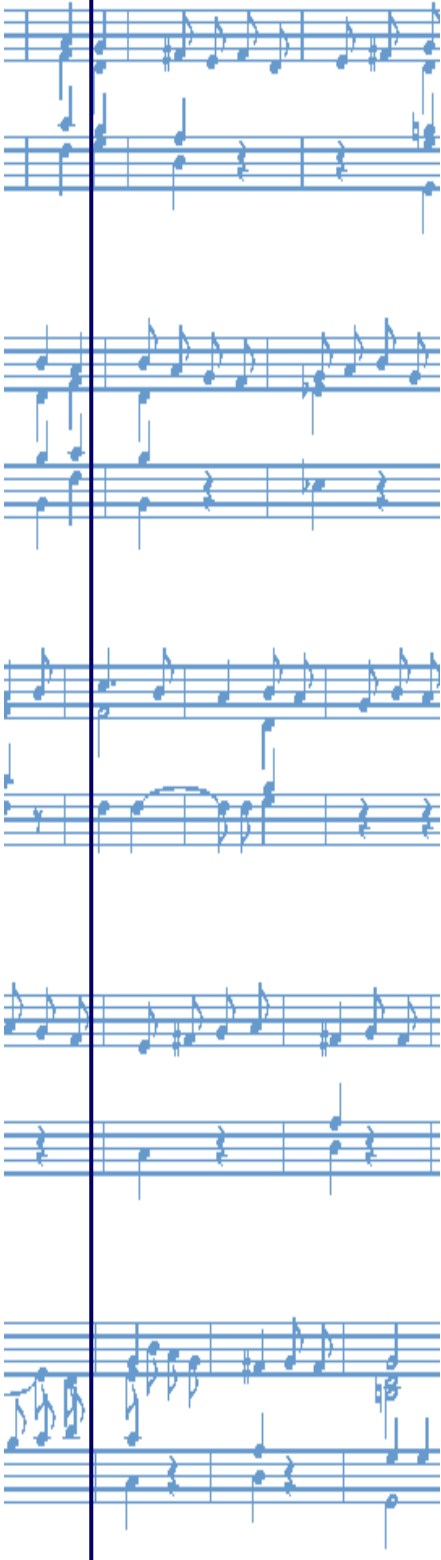




National Arts Centre

*September 27, 2006*



# Roundtable on

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## Mental Health and the Arts

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Dear Reader:

Every year we look forward to the National Arts Centre Roundtable, knowing we will be in for a highly stimulating discussion with some of the brightest minds in the country. This year was no exception. In fact, we would venture to say that the National Arts Centre Roundtable on Mental Health and the Arts was the most powerful session we have hosted to date.

We learned some stunning statistics. In his keynote address, Michael Wilson, Canada's Ambassador to the United States and a champion of mental health, told us that mental illnesses and addictions represent between 30 and 40 per cent of the global burden of disease, that the estimated average age for the onset of anxiety disorders in Canada is 12 and of addictions, 18. He also said that mental illness is concentrated among men and women in their prime working and earning years. As he put it, "this is the heart of our purchasing power, our economic production ... the parents of our children, and the children of a generation to whom falls the burden and opportunity of making historic change—a change in society's perception and response to the needs of those living with mental illness."

Combating the stigma and stereotypes associated with mental illness is an area in which arts groups, which have powerful resources and the ability to reach a wide audience, can help. Participants gave remarkable examples of how the arts can also be used to treat, help people live with and perhaps even prevent mental illness. We heard wonderful stories of arts organizations and mental health bodies working together, from an exhibit at the National Gallery of Canada of art by people living with mental illness, to support by TELUS for local arts organizations' efforts to help promote the well-being of young Canadians. Everyone agreed that, although there is still much more research to be done on the intersection of the arts and mental health, there is enough knowledge now for mental health professionals, arts organizations, governments, philanthropists and community leaders to rally in the fight against mental illness.

Our sincere thanks go to Sun Life Financial, the Roundtable's Presenting Sponsor, and the University of Ottawa, Roundtable Associate Sponsor, for making this forum possible. It is our sincere hope that the National Arts Centre Roundtable on Mental Health and the Arts can be the launching pad for that cross-sector effort on behalf of a most important cause—the mental health of Canadians.

Yours truly,

Peter A. Herrndorf  
President and CEO  
National Arts Centre

Darrell Louise Gregersen  
Chief Executive Officer  
National Arts Centre Foundation

# **REPORT ON THE NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE ROUNDTABLE ON MENTAL HEALTH AND THE ARTS**

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**Proud Sponsor of the 2006 Roundtable on Mental Health and the Arts**

## **Introduction**

This report summarizes the discussion at the National Arts Centre Roundtable on Mental Health and the Arts that took place September 27, 2006, the second in a series of roundtables on healing and the arts, succeeding last year's very successful National Arts Centre Roundtable on Music and Medicine.

Over three and a half hours, community leaders from the worlds of science, business, the arts, government and philanthropy engaged in a conversation that ranged from current scientific knowledge about genes and creativity, to how the arts can be used to help treat mental illness and promote mental health.

The Roundtable was designed to address a variety of perspectives and subjects having to do with mental health and the arts. Michael Wilson, Canada's Ambassador to the United States and champion of mental health issues, delivered the opening address, in which he called mental illness a challenge that defines the current generation of young Canadians. He suggested that arts groups are poised to help defeat stigma, deflate stereotypes and generate understanding about mental illness.

Subsequent presentations spoke to various subjects concerning mental health and the arts. Dr. Jacques Bradwejn, Head of Psychiatry at the Ottawa Hospital, discussed the potential for arts groups to work in the mental health arena. Dr. David Goldbloom, Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Toronto and Senior Medical Advisor at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, spoke about what scientists know about creativity and the brain. Finally, Dr. Bin Hu, Professor in the Department of Clinical Neurosciences and the Hotchkiss Brain Institute in Calgary, explained how music can help treat people with Parkinson's disease.

Following the formal presentations, Roundtable participants entered into a wide-ranging discussion that touched on the following questions:

- a. How might Canada's arts organizations respond effectively and creatively to a growing understanding of the relationship between health and the arts?
- b. How might Canada's healthcare providers and the research community respond effectively and creatively to a growing understanding of the relationship between health and the arts?
- c. Is there a role for the arts in the prevention of mental illness?

Don Newman, Senior Parliamentary Editor at CBC Television, moderated the discussion.

The 2005 Roundtable on Music and Medicine began the National Arts Centre's public exploration of the arts as a healing and treatment tool in human health. It focused on the impact of music in the treatment of cancer, heart disease and stroke, traumatic brain injury, and aging and dementia. Participants—prominent leaders in the medical and social policy fields, as well as arts supporters and senior public policy makers—discussed both pure science and clinical applications, with particular emphasis on the untapped potential of music to improve well-being.

Prior to last year's Roundtable on Music and Medicine, the three previous National Arts Centre Roundtables addressed issues relating to corporate sponsorship and individual philanthropy in the performing arts, as well as public and private sector partnerships. The Roundtables have featured a wide range of Canadian and international participants, including keynote speakers James Wolfensohn, then president of the World Bank and Chairman Emeritus of the John F. Kennedy Center of the Performing Arts; Richard Bradshaw, General Director of the Canadian Opera Company; and former federal finance minister John Manley.

This year's Roundtable discussion took place on the same day as the 10<sup>th</sup> annual National Arts Centre Gala, which raises money for the National Youth and Education Trust, the primary source of funds for the National Arts Centre's youth and education programming. The National Arts Centre Roundtable was supported by Presenting Sponsor Sun Life Financial. The University of Ottawa was an Associate Sponsor.

**Agenda**

**National Arts Centre, Le Salon  
September 27, 2006**

- 8:30 a.m. Breakfast in the National Arts Centre Foyer; Exhibition in the National Arts Centre Salon  
*(Music: Finding the Still Point – Music for Healing, Vancouver Chamber Choir)*
- 9:00 a.m. Welcome and Introductions
- *Mr. Peter A. Herrndorf, President and CEO, National Arts Centre*
  - *Mrs. Julia Foster, Chair, National Arts Centre Board of Trustees*
- 9:20 a.m. Opening Address
- *The Honourable Michael Wilson, Ambassador to the United States of America*
- 9:35 a.m. Mental Health and the Arts: Untapped Potential
- *Dr. Jacques Bradwejn, Acting Dean, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ottawa*
- 9:42 a.m. The Mind, Brain and Creativity
- *Dr. David S. Goldbloom, Professor, Department of Psychiatry, University of Toronto*
- 9:55 a.m. Music and Parkinson's Disease: An Example of the Role of the Arts in Health
- *Dr. Bin Hu, Member, Hotchkiss Brain Institute, University of Calgary*
- 10:05 a.m. Initial Questions
- 10:20 a.m. *Break*  
*(Music: Finding the Still Point – Music for Healing, Vancouver Chamber Choir)*
- 10:45: a.m. Roundtable Leadership Discussion

Discussion Concepts:

- a. How might Canada's arts organizations respond effectively and creatively to a growing understanding of the relationship between health and the arts?
- b. How might Canada's healthcare providers and the research community respond effectively and creatively to a growing understanding of the relationship between health and the arts?
- c. Is there a role for the arts in the prevention of mental illness?

Discussion Outcomes Sought:

- a. Canada's arts organizations are excited about developing relationships with their communities in new ways, to build awareness and philanthropic support in new sectors.
- b. Public awareness of the importance of mental health, and of the arts' ability to serve as a powerful tool for well-being, grows.
- c. The public sector is more engaged in fostering collaborative work between the arts and health sectors.
- d. The scientific, medical and government sectors commit to exploring the potential more rigorously together.

11:30 a.m. Further Reflections from All Participants

- a. Personal perspectives on why this is important
- b. What can we each commit to doing as a result of this Roundtable?

11:55 a.m. Closing Remarks

- *Mr. Don Newman, Senior Parliamentary Editor, CBC News*
- *Mr. Peter A. Herrndorf, President and CEO, National Arts Centre*

## **Opening Address**

Canadian Ambassador Michael Wilson began the Roundtable by asking participants to imagine a world in which understanding and acceptance of mental illness are routine, stigma and discrimination are rare, and human compassion and scientific knowledge govern our response to mental illness.

Ambassador Wilson has long been a champion of mental health issues. His own life has been touched by mental illness: in 1995, his son Cameron, who suffered from depression, committed suicide. He is active in NeuroScience Canada Partnership, a national non-profit charitable organization that helps Canadians challenged by neurological and psychiatric disorders by supporting research into mechanisms that protect the brain and nervous system. He is also involved with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Canada's leading addiction and mental health teaching hospital, and chairs the Global Business and Economic Roundtable on Mental Health.

Ambassador Wilson was chair of the Mental Health Implementation Task Force for Toronto and Peel.

In 2002, he was awarded the Special Recognition Award from the Canadian Psychiatric Association for "unwavering leadership to achieve the goal of Mental Illness Awareness Week." In 2005, he became a ministerial adviser to then health minister Ujjal Dosanjh on mental health in the federal government workplace.

"This is the heart of our purchasing power, our economic production ... the parents of our children, and the children of a generation to whom falls the burden and opportunity of making historic change—a change in society's perception and response to the needs of those living with mental illness."

In his address, Ambassador Wilson presented some stunning statistics:

- Mental illness is concentrated among men and women in their prime working and earning years.
- The average age for the onset of anxiety disorders in Canada is 12; the average age for addictions is 18.
- Mental illnesses and addictions represent between 30 and 40 per cent of the global burden of disease.
- About 4,000 Canadians and 30,000 Americans commit suicide every year, with depression as the cause nine times out of 10.

Because it affects young and working Canadians, mental illness takes an enormous economic toll, Ambassador Wilson said: one energy company estimated it lost 11 million barrels of oil production each year—or about \$200 million—because of mental illness.



“This is the heart of our purchasing power, our economic production ... the parents of our children, and the children of a generation to whom falls the burden and opportunity of making historic change—a change in society’s perception and response to the needs of those living with mental illness.”

The mental health crisis will be a defining challenge of this generation, and millions of Canadians are counting on that challenge being met, he said.

Arts groups can help defeat stigma, deflate stereotypes, and generate understanding, Mr. Wilson said. Too often, people think of mental illness as a character flaw or sign of weakness, when it is in fact a brain disorder with physical properties that can depress the immune system, increase the risk of heart attack, and compound the effects of arthritis, for example.

People also think people with mental illness are more likely to be violent—a stereotype often portrayed in film and in the media.

“Artists and arts institutions can help correct the record and project the real face of mental illness,” Mr. Wilson said.

Mr. Wilson said the arts can also be used to help care for and treat people with mental illness, and pointed to the Royal Ottawa Hospital’s partner and arts program, which uses visual arts to help promote healing. He also said artists can be advocates for better care, housing and opportunities for people with mental illness.

He said there has been progress in advancing mental health issues; in some workplaces, companies have made progress in early detection of mental illness and in ensuring employees have easier access to care.

“Why not a world which **understands mental illness** and cares for the mentally ill as a matter of good conscience and good policy? Why not a world like that?”

Part of his role as ambassador to the United States is to promote Canadian innovation and scientific achievements, as well as collaboration with the United States in research. There are many examples of such collaboration, as in the International Partnership for Mental Health Research—a new alliance of mental health organizations dedicated to promoting and supporting mental health research around the world. The partnership’s founding members include the U.S.-based National Alliance for Research on Schizophrenia and Depression and the National Education Alliance for Borderline Personality Disorder, as well as the Schizophrenia Society of Canada and the Canadian Psychiatric Research Foundation.

In closing, Mr. Wilson quoted the playwright George Bernard Shaw, who once said: “Some see things as they are, and ask why. I see things that might be, and ask, why not?”

Mr. Wilson challenged the participants to ask themselves: “Why not a world which understands mental illness and cares for the mentally ill as a matter of good conscience and good policy? Why not a world like that?”

## **Mental Health and the Arts: Untapped Potential**

The next presentation emphasized the urgency of the need for action on the mental health crisis, and suggested that the arts could play a key role in that fight, particularly in the area of prevention.

The presenter was Dr. Jacques Bradwejn, who is Head of Psychiatry at the Ottawa Hospital and is internationally recognized for his research on anxiety disorders. Interested in the role of complementary medicines in mental health and mental illness, he sponsored the first Canadian Symposium on Psychiatry and Alternative Medicines and has instituted a research program on herbal products in treatment of psychiatric disorders. He was the recipient of the award for Innovations in Neuropsychopharmacology of the Canadian College of Neuropsychopharmacology. Dr. Bradwejn is also Chair and Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Ottawa.

In his presentation, Dr. Bradwejn said many people take the arts for granted and do not think about how privileged they are in being inspired or moved by visiting a gallery, listening to music or seeing a live performance. It's often the same with mental health, he said.

“We do not recognize the preciousness of being able to think, to feel, to experience a positive sense of self, to experience joy in our relationships and to evolve as a person.”

Poor mental health is a “modern day plague,” said Dr. Bradwejn, with 15 per cent of any population suffering at some time in their lives from a major mental illness such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression or addiction. Mental illness is now among the top-ranking illnesses in terms of frequency and cost. In Canada, that cost is estimated at more than \$14 billion a year, he said. One suicide—often of a young adult—occurs every 40 seconds, worldwide. “In addition to bringing enormous economic costs, mental illness really is quite costly in terms of lost lives or experience of life.”

He said progress in research has led to positive developments, such as new diagnostic and treatment methods “that have given lives back to those who previously had no hope of living.” Still, he said much more research is needed and regretted that society does not support mental illness research as much as they support research into physical illness.

The arts, Dr. Bradwejn said, may play many roles in treating mental illness, particularly in the promotion of mental health—an area that is generating a lot of interest.

“We do not recognize the preciousness of being able to **think**, to **feel**, to experience a **positive sense of self**, to experience **joy** in our relationships and to evolve as a person.”

“Mental health is much more than freedom from mental illness, as much as physical health is more than just freedom from illness. So we should be viewing mental health in a perspective of fitness that can be cultivated and enhanced through any means, including the arts, and the enjoyment and inspiration from the arts.”

Dr. Bradwejn said sectors need to work together in the fight against mental illness, and that he hoped that the Roundtable could be a fruitful start “for mental health, the arts and for society in general.”

“It is often said that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, therefore we might create together, all of us here—artists, mental health professionals, elected officials, philanthropists, sufferers of mental illness—we might all create a collective effort that is much greater than each of our individual efforts in the fight against mental illness or the promotion of mental health.”

**“Mental health is much more than freedom from mental illness, as much as physical health is more than just freedom from illness.”**

## **The Mind, Brain and Creativity**

The next presentation focused on the nature of creativity itself, and the often-asked question about a possible link between creative people and people with mental illness.

The speaker on this subject was Dr. David Goldbloom who, in 1998, was the inaugural physician-in-chief at the newly created Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) in Toronto, a centre formed by the merger of the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry, the Addiction Research Foundation, the Queen Street Mental Health Centre and the Donwood Institute. He is a board member of the CAMH Foundation and the Canadian Mental Health Association Toronto Branch. A supporter of the arts, he is also a member of the board of governors at the Stratford Festival of Canada, president of the board of directors of the Off Centre Music Salon and a former director of the Glenn Gould Foundation. Dr. Goldbloom is Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Toronto.

He began his presentation by highlighting the danger of perceiving the creativity of people with mental illness as symptomatic of their illness. Although there are now methods by which to measure creativity, people must not forget that it has an “unknowable” quality.

“We always have to try to strike a balance as we scrutinize topics like this,” he told Roundtable participants.

There is a scientific movement to measure a person’s creativity and it can now be quantified, but creativity is hard to define, Dr. Goldbloom said. One neuroscientist described it as “our capacity to generate a product that only an individual, as a result of his or her particular experiences, knowledge, sensitivity, and interpretation of life, can produce,” Dr. Goldbloom said.

He spoke of several recent developments, such as the identification of candidate genes for creativity that involve the neurotransmitters dopamine and serotonin, both of which are relevant to movement disorders such as Parkinson’s disease and to psychiatric disorders such as bipolar disorder, depression and schizophrenia. Another recent study comparing dancers and competitive athletes showed the dancers had strong gene associations to creativity. Finally, functional MRI has shown that children performing creative tasks invoke the right dorsolateral prefrontal cortex of their brains, indicating that that area may be one of the seats of creativity. That same area is at the peak of the brain’s evolutionary process, he said.

“There is a romantic notion of the mad artist in a garret apartment starving, struggling, composing, writing. But the clinical evidence we have is that when illness takes grasp it **profoundly interferes with that creative ability.**”

Inevitably, people perceive artists and creative people in pathological terms, even to the point of asking whether creativity is an attention deficit disorder, Dr. Goldbloom said.

About 40 per cent of creative children are described with the same vocabulary used for children with attention deficit disorder, he said. Creative children are described by teachers as “making up the rules, they’re impulsive, they’re non-conformist, and they’re highly emotional.” However, the creative children do not run into the same kinds of trouble at school and at home as children with attention deficit disorder, he said.

Creativity does run in families, as do mood disorders, he said. In fact, there is a “tremendous overlap” in a number of studies between manic-depressive illness and creative genius. Children who are at high genetic risk for manic-depressive illness show much more creativity than children who are not at high risk for manic-depressive illness, he said.

Dr. Goldbloom concluded his remarks by saying there are myths about artists and mental illness that must be debunked, particularly the notion that artists must suffer in order to create.

“There is a romantic notion of the mad artist in a garret apartment starving, struggling, composing, writing. But the clinical evidence we have is that when illness takes grasp it profoundly interferes with that creative ability. We are much better at battling mental illness than we are at bottling creativity. And I believe that treating mental illness helps let creativity out of that bottle and into our lives.”

## **Music and Parkinson's Disease**

The presentation on music and Parkinson's disease demonstrated a practical application of the arts in the treatment of a specific illness.

The presenter, Dr. Bin Hu, is a professor in the Department of Clinical Neurosciences and Hotchkiss Brain Institute in Calgary. A world-renowned neurophysiologist, his area of interest is brain circuits mediating acoustic experiences. Work from his laboratory has led to the discovery of sensory-cueing neurons that help connect stimuli to motor, cognitive and emotional responses. He is leading a research team that is studying how the acoustic cueing network can be remade through rehabilitative training and used to overcome debilitating motor and cognitive symptoms in Parkinson's patients.

Dr. Hu began his presentation by saying that Parkinson's disease is not purely physical. It poses many cognitive difficulties, and many patients develop mental problems, such as depression and gambling addictions.

Dr. Hu said music and the arts can be very powerful for patients with Parkinson's. Some turn to their favourite music "and feel like the Parkinson's is gone," he said. Others feel music is their only friend. Why music is so powerful for these patients remains unknown, he said.

Dr. Hu's laboratory has produced important findings to do with identifying the selective brain network that may explain some of the tremendous music effects seen in patients.

He has been trying to understand why some patients who have lost both motor and cognitive function still have tremendous response to, and capacity for, music.

For one Parkinson's patient, hearing a familiar piece of music she had chosen—*Dancing Queen* by ABBA—briefly helped her to walk more smoothly and halted the phenomenon of physically freezing on the spot, a common occurrence in Parkinson's patients that can lead to fractures and necessitate long-term care.

The same effect did not present itself with pure rhythm lacking musical content or familiarity, Dr. Hu said. "All music is not equal. We must be very careful not to generalize the music effect."

He said he is grateful to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research for support, adding more research is necessary. Still, he is very optimistic about his findings.

"We now have the tools actually to follow exactly the single neurons—these so-called auditory music-cueing neurons—to know where they project to, and to find each target and map it out at very precise and unprecedented details. In the end we're very hopeful, and eventually we'll find a very rational approach and combine music, art and health."

## **Discussion on the Morning's Presentations**

Following the presentations, Roundtable moderator Don Newman opened the floor to questions and reactions, and an interesting discussion ensued.

Mr. Newman asked Dr. Bin Hu whether a person's exposure to music affected response. Dr. Hu said reactions vary dramatically, citing a piece of music that made one woman in a music therapy group cry as the piece triggered memories of being in a concentration camp.

Dr. David Goldbloom said music therapy isn't for everyone. He pointed to the tendency in the health professions of looking at "what's wrong with someone without being able to tell you much about their strengths and interests."

"I believe that helping people with mental illness to recover involves not simply the removal of symptoms of distress but the promotion of those skills and attributes that make that person feel fulfilled."

Dr. Jacques Bradwejn echoed that point, saying the medical community needs to shift from negative to positive psychology. "It means being able to enhance whatever capacity that continues to be there in anybody who suffers from physical illness or mental illness." He also said the potential for the arts and mental health healing has not yet been fully explored, particularly in areas of prevention.

David Mitchell, Vice-President of University Relations, University of Ottawa, asked Dr. Goldbloom whether people with mental illness have opportunities and perhaps responsibilities toward the arts and the broader community.

Dr. Goldbloom said the challenge is to avoid defining people by their mental illness, which makes it seem that anything they do creatively is a reflection of that co-incident disease.

"I tend to shy away from the idea of a unitary contribution that people with mental illness can make to the arts."

He also said it was his experience that mental illness hinders rather than enhances an artist's ability to create. Dr. Bradwejn agreed, saying that when jazz legend Charlie Parker was asked whether his addiction to heroin helped his playing, he replied that he felt he would have played a lot better without the drug.

Laverne G'Froerer, a professional singer with the Vancouver Chamber Choir, told a story about a young man with bipolar disorder who refused therapy and isolated himself from everyone around him. His father decided to hire a music therapist and composer to visit his son. Music was the only thing that brought his son out of his isolation, and he is now working full time as a film animator at a film company. This was "music enabling mental health in a very real way," Ms. G'froerer said.

**"I believe that helping people with mental illness to recover involves not simply the removal of symptoms of distress but the promotion of those skills and attributes that make that person **feel fulfilled.**"**

Ambassador Michael Wilson said he'd heard about people who suffer from bipolar disorder who are terrific entrepreneurs, and asked whether that kind of crossover was typical. Dr. Goldbloom replied that creativity can manifest itself in many ways, from business through the arts.

Dr. Rémi Quirion said that Canada ranks third in the world behind the United States and Great Britain in neuroscience and research (in terms of impact of what is published) and that when it comes to work on music and the brain, Canada is the leader.

On the question of whether artists have a higher tendency toward mental illness, he suggested it may just be that the artistic community is more open and accepting of mental illness than other communities. "I would argue that the incidence of mental illnesses and addiction is as high in the business community as it is in the artistic community. It's just that a lot of people are afraid to speak about it."

Dr. Goldbloom shared that view, adding that in speaking to the banking sector and other major corporate sectors, he has learned that mental illness is the biggest cause of short-term disability in the workplace.

Dr. Bradwejn said cultural sensitivity is important to consider in the use of the arts in mental illness, adding that Canada is in a good position to do this because of its cultural diversity.

Steven Fletcher, the Member of Parliament for Charleswood-St. James and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, asked how the arts community and governments can fight stigma.

Dr. Goldbloom said the recent report of the Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology contained clear recommendations on making fighting stigma a national issue, adding that Canada is the only G8 country without a national action plan on mental health. He said that while governments do have a role to play, combating stigma begins at home.

"For all of us in this country, there's nobody who can stand up and say, 'not my family—nobody in my family has ever been affected by these issues.'"

Dr. Alan Bernstein, President and CEO of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, said fighting stigma requires leaders such as Ambassador Wilson to come forward and speak about their own or their family's experience with mental illness and addictions. Society must also accept that mental illness is an aberration of a normal process, just as cancer is "not from Mars" but in fact an aberration of normal cellular processes. Mr. Ron Mannix, a



Calgary business person and philanthropist, agreed people need to understand that mental illness is common and that talking about it openly can reduce stigma.

Dr. Stanley Kutcher, Associate Dean of International Medical Development and Research at Dalhousie University's Faculty of Medicine, said many areas warrant further examination, including the study of music in socialization, music's role in buffering stress, how music can intervene in disease, and music's role in recovery.

Dr. Hu said there is great potential for the philanthropic community and the pharmaceutical industry to advance the beneficial connection between music and mental health.

Janet Yale, TELUS Executive Vice-President of Corporate Affairs, asked Dr. Goldbloom about the role of the education system in promoting the arts as a creative outlet and as a way to foster well-being.

Dr. Goldbloom said cuts to physical education and arts programs "have cut off generations of children from those outlets—whether physical or creative—that enrich our lives." He also spoke about the worrying tendency of viewing the world as pathological, in that "the boundaries of what's normal for kids have shrunk, and as a result creates a lot of disorder and symptomology that might have, in an earlier time, just been tolerated as variants of normal."

**"For all of us in this country, there's nobody who can stand up and say, 'not my family—nobody in my family has ever been affected by these issues.'"**

Dr. Bernstein said people need to realize that very little is known about how the brain actually works. Still, much progress has been made. For example, it was once thought that schizophrenia was strictly inherited from the mother, whereas today the search is on for the actual genes for schizophrenia and bipolar disease. The CIHR funds many such research projects.

## **Roundtable Leadership Discussion**

After a short break, Roundtable participants continued the morning's discussion, while considering certain questions.

- How might Canada's arts organizations respond effectively and creatively to a growing understanding of the relationship between health and the arts?
- How might Canada's healthcare providers and the research community respond effectively to a growing understanding of the relationship between health and the arts?
- Is there a role for the arts in the prevention of mental illness?

Dr. Tony Hakim said while it is true that we are at the forefront of discovering how the brain works, enough knowledge exists now for arts and health organizations to work together.

Laverne G'froerer spoke about how the Vancouver Chamber Choir produced a CD called *Finding the Still Point: Music for Healing*. The CD's accompanying booklet featured 14 pages written or dedicated by 14 groups or individuals in memory of loved ones. The project was entirely paid for by donations: Within three months of beginning the project the choir had raised \$37,000. "This is an example of how the arts can self-fund their projects and make a difference to the community," she said.

Dr. David Goldbloom noted that the artwork displayed in the room, works from an exhibit called *From Myth to Muse*, was created by the Workmen Arts Project, an independent arts organization that is part of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto. The project mounts theatre productions and maintains free artist studios for people recovering from substance abuse or mental illness within the hospital. The exhibit was a collaboration with the musical group Tafelmusik.

Dr. Jacques Bradwejn said some populations have been incorporating the arts into the promotion of mental health for years. It has been shown, for example, that Tibetan monks are able to light up the areas of the brain connected to positive sense of self through meditation, drawing, chanting and singing. The monks' example serves as a reminder to use a multi-dimensional approach to health, disease prevention and disease reduction, he said.

Dr. Dianne Kipnes, a clinical psychologist and philanthropist in Edmonton, said she is impressed with the number of programs that integrate the arts and mental illness, adolescence, autism and cancer. "It is already happening in our community ... and people are actually practising this and seeing good results."

Marnie Spears, President and CEO of Ketchum Canada, suggested scientists must learn to use good storytelling techniques to translate their work into simple terms so philanthropists can identify how they can contribute toward partnerships between mental health and arts organizations.

Laverne G'froerer said that arts groups need to ask the right questions of the people struggling with physical or mental illness, and of their caregivers. "We need to ask them what it is that they need from us to help through the difficult times so that we can provide truly useful tools."

Dr. Rémi Quirion said society and our education system need to value the arts as much as sports, and that young people should not have to choose between studying science and the arts.

"Very early on we ask them to make up their mind, and it shouldn't be like that, because after that it takes a lot of work to bring these two back together."

Society must also do more to promote mental health activities, which generate new synapses in the brain. Finally, artwork by people with mental illness should get out of the hospital and into the galleries. A project in which Dr. Quirion was involved exhibited work by the mentally healed at the National Gallery of Canada with the help of a non-governmental organization.

Parliamentary Secretary Steven Fletcher spoke about his own experience with music after he severely damaged his spinal cord and was in the hospital in intensive care, paralyzed, conscious, yet unable to communicate with the many people surrounding him. "What I found most helpful for myself was listening to classical music—Yo-Yo Ma, Dvorak, the *New World Symphony* and so on. And that brought a glimpse of heaven in the midst of hell. I think that is an example of how art can make an impact on short-term pain, or even long-term rehabilitation. I went to the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra on Saturday nights to experience that .... I look forward to working with you, and I know our government looks forward to working with you to see what we can do on this front."

Ron Mannix said philanthropic efforts are all well and good, but that governments must lead in the fight against mental illness. "It rests with government to change the medical side of the equation as well as the educational side, to have the most powerful impact we can, and create real benefit to our society."

Susan Peterson, Associate Deputy Minister of Canadian Heritage, asked Dr. Stan Kutcher about mental illness among teenagers and the elderly. Dr. Kutcher said it is important to examine our own perceptions and expectations about each group, such as the assumption that aging must necessarily bring on depression.

"We carry these frameworks in our mind about what is expected of people at certain points in their life."

David Mitchell said arts groups can play a role in helping raise the profile of mental health issues. He also applauded the National Arts Centre in organizing the Roundtable, which he called an excellent example of the kind of dialogue that needs to happen between arts and health groups.

Janet Yale, Executive Vice-President of Corporate Affairs at TELUS, said her company contributes regularly to projects that focus on youth and mental well-being. For example, TELUS contributes to the Ottawa School of Speech and Drama, the Ottawa School of Dance and the Ottawa Junior Youth Orchestra so that they can perform in schools. This program is particularly important, given that many schools do not offer some of those art forms and performing in schools is a way to expose potential young musicians, actors and dancers to an art form they may like to try. TELUS is also funding a pilot program of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board to have local blues singer Maria Hawkins go into schools and work with kids on self-esteem through music.

“When we think about the role of the arts in people’s well-being, sense of identity, and development, there are things we can do at the small level as well as at the big level.”

As the morning’s discussion wound to a close, Judy Beamish of Sun Life Financial thanked Darrell Gregersen and the National Arts Centre Foundation for bringing the Roundtable into being and for a stimulating discussion.

National Arts Centre President and CEO, Peter Herrndorf, thanked Mrs. Gregersen, Ambassador Michael Wilson, and Roundtable sponsors Sun Life Financial and the University of Ottawa. Mr. Herrndorf said the National Arts Centre will aim to develop a post-Roundtable strategy to help ensure the dialogue on mental health and the arts continues across the country.

“What I found most helpful for myself was listening to classical music—Yo-Yo Ma, Dvorak, the *New World Symphony* and so on. And that brought a **glimpse of heaven in the midst of hell**. I think that is an example of how art can make an impact on short-term pain, or even long-term rehabilitation.”

## **Conclusion**

The National Arts Centre Roundtable on Mental Health and the Arts was the second in a series of three Roundtables on the intersection between health and the arts. Last year the series got off to a fascinating start with a session on music and medicine.

In the words of National Arts Centre President and CEO, Peter Herrndorf, this year's session was perhaps the most powerful Roundtable to date. More than any other Roundtable in the past, participants told us that the need for action on the fight against mental illness is urgent. We were very encouraged by the deep sense of commitment around the table to not let the dialogue end. For our part, we will endeavour to create a post-Roundtable strategy on this subject in the near future.

We heard that there is much more work and research to be done in understanding how the brain works. We also heard how the arts can play a role in fighting the stigma still associated with mental illness. There is a growing willingness to acknowledge and fight mental illness not only because it's the right thing to do but because it makes economic sense—an issue no nation can afford to ignore.

Hearing some of the country's top researchers, scientists and doctors tell us about the way human beings—particularly those with mental illness—respond to music was incredibly compelling. For an arts organization, and indeed for everyone around the table, it was so encouraging to hear about the good that the arts can do for this particular community. And that community is *us*: as Dr. David Goldboom put it, no Canadian family can say it has been unaffected by mental illness.

We were encouraged to hear many wonderful examples of how the arts can help people with mental illness, as well as stories of health and arts organizations working together to improve the lives of people with mental illness. At the National Arts Centre we are very excited about the potential that exists for more such partnerships. Like most of us around the table that day, we have come away from the Roundtable inspired to do and learn more about this exciting area.

We are proud that National Arts Centre Roundtables have become a forum for these kinds of important discussions. We hope this year's discussion will lead to many more, as well as much needed action. For though we are still in the very early stages of understanding how the brain actually works, we have more than enough evidence, information and examples of health and arts organizations working together to know there is no need to wait.

The time is now for us all to tackle this most important issue facing Canadians.

## **Recommendations**

1. Encourage arts groups to think about ways they can raise the profile of mental health issues and help deflate negative stereotypes.
2. Encourage partnerships between arts organizations and health care/mental health care organizations to treat and prevent mental illness.
3. Encourage artists to be advocates for better care, housing and opportunities for people with mental illness.
4. Encourage leaders with personal experience with mental health issues to become spokespeople in order to help fight stigma.
5. Post-Roundtable, continue the national dialogue across different sectors—government, the arts, business, philanthropy—in order to generate a stronger collective effort.
6. Support publicly funded research into the effect of the arts on the treatment and prevention of mental illness.
7. Impress upon the federal government the need for a national action plan on mental health that includes the fight against stigma, as well as significant resources to support research, treatment, prevention and education.
8. Support the creation of a national mental health commission, as recommended by former senator Michael Kirby in the 2006 report on mental health entitled *Out of the Shadows at Last—Transforming Mental Health, Mental Illness and Addiction Services in Canada*.
9. Submit research articles on the role of the arts and mental health to medical journals in order to help educate family physicians on the importance of the arts in the treatment and prevention of mental illness, and promotion of mental health.
10. Support efforts to showcase art by people with mental illness in the public sphere, in order to educate the public about the enormous contributions that people with mental illness can make, and to help combat stigma.
11. Support mental health associations as they advocate for mental health issues; encourage medical schools to do the same.
12. Advocate for strong arts programs in schools as a means to promote the mental well-being of children and young people.

## **Participant List**

### **Hosts:**

Mrs. Julia Foster, Chair, National Arts Centre Board of Trustees

Mr. Peter A. Herrndorf, President and CEO, National Arts Centre

Mrs. Darrell Louise Gregersen, CEO, National Arts Centre Foundation

### **Opening Address:**

The Honourable Michael Wilson, P.C., O.C.,

Canadian Ambassador to the United States of America

### **Moderator:**

Mr. Don Newman, Senior Parliamentary Editor, CBC News

### **Special Guest:**

Mr. Pinchas Zukerman, Music Director, National Arts Centre

**Presenting Sponsor:** Sun Life Financial

**Associate Sponsor:** University of Ottawa

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### **Ms. Diane Ablonczy**

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of  
Finance  
Ottawa, Ontario

### **Dr. Judy Beamish**

Vice-President and Chief Medical Director  
Sun Life Financial  
Toronto, Ontario

### **Dr. Alan Bernstein, O.C.**

President, Canadian Institutes of Health  
Research  
Ottawa, Ontario

### **Dr. Jacques Bradwejn**

Professor and Chair, Department of  
Psychiatry, University of Ottawa  
Psychiatrist-in-Chief, Royal Ottawa  
Hospital  
Head of Psychiatry, Ottawa Hospital  
Ottawa, Ontario

### **Mr. Steven Fletcher**

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of  
Health  
Ottawa, Ontario

### **Ms. Laverne G'froerer**

Certified General Accountant  
North Vancouver, British Columbia

### **Dr. David S. Goldbloom**

Senior Medical Advisor,  
Education and Public Affairs,  
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health  
Professor of Psychiatry, University of Toronto  
Toronto, Ontario

### **Dr. Antoine M. Hakim**

Professor and University Chair, Neurology,  
University of Ottawa  
CEO and Scientific Director,  
Canadian Stroke Network  
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**Dr. Bin Hu**

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Neurosciences, Faculty of Medicine,  
University of Calgary  
Member, Hotchkiss Brain Institute  
Calgary, Alberta

**Dr. Dianne Kipnes**

Clinical Psychologist  
Edmonton, Alberta

**Dr. Stanley P. Kutcher**

Associate Dean of International Medical  
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Halifax, Nova Scotia

**Mr. Ronald Neil Mannix, O.C.**

Calgary, Alberta

**Mr. David Mitchell**

Vice-President, University Relations,  
University of Ottawa  
Ottawa, Ontario

**Ms. Susan Peterson**

Associate Deputy Minister  
Canadian Heritage  
Gatineau, Quebec

**Dr. Rémi Quirion**

Scientific Director, Douglas Hospital  
Research Centre, McGill University  
Scientific Director, Institute of  
Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction,  
Canadian Institutes of Health Research  
Montreal, Quebec

**Mr. Frank Cameron Sobey**

Chair and Trustee, Crombie REIT  
Stellarton, Nova Scotia

**Ms. Marnie A. Spears**

President and CEO, Ketchum Canada Inc.  
Toronto, Ontario

**The Honourable Michael Wilson, P.C., O.C.**

Canadian Ambassador to the United States of  
America  
Toronto, Ontario (Washington, D.C.)

**Ms. Janet Yale**

Executive Vice-President, Corporate Affairs,  
TELUS  
Ottawa, Ontario



## **Canada's National Arts Centre**

The National Arts Centre raised its curtains for the first time in 1969. Created by the Government of Canada as a Centennial project during the 1960s, the National Arts Centre has become Canada's foremost showcase for the performing arts. Today, the National Arts Centre works with countless artists, both emerging and established, from across Canada and around the world, and collaborates with scores of other arts organizations across the country.

The National Arts Centre is strongly committed to being a leader and innovator in each of the performing arts fields in which it works: classical music, English theatre, French theatre, dance, variety, and community programming. It is at the forefront of youth and educational activities, supporting programs for young and emerging artists and for young audiences, and producing resources and study materials for teachers. It is the only multidisciplinary, bilingual performing arts centre in North America, and one of the largest in the world.

## **National Arts Centre Foundation**

The National Arts Centre Foundation was established in July 2000, with the mandate to raise significant financial support for artistic and educational programming by the National Arts Centre. The Foundation's mission is to inspire individuals, corporations and foundations to invest in the National Arts Centre's vision of artistic innovation, development of young talent, and creation of new works, to benefit all Canadians.

The National Arts Centre Foundation provides a full service development program for Canadians from coast to coast who wish to support the National Arts Centre, including opportunities for annual giving, major and planned gifts, special events and corporate sponsorship. A substantial portion of the Foundation's funds are raised through its National Youth and Education Trust, which is dedicated to investing in young Canadians through the performing arts.

## **Sun Life Financial**

At Sun Life Financial, we are committed to supporting the communities in which we live, work and do business. A major part of that commitment is our focus on health-related matters, including providing funding for a wide range of institutions, agencies and organizations that are researching and discovering proactive ways to prevent illness and disease.

We believe that raising awareness and understanding of mental illness is an important issue facing Canadians today, and we support the researchers in this important field of medicine who are working diligently to find new and creative therapies. Our sponsorship of the National Arts Centre's Roundtable on Mental Illness and the Arts is one example of this support.

Sun Life Financial is proud to sponsor this important initiative, one that combines our corporate commitment to health-related causes with our long-standing support of the arts. As leaders from arts organizations explore the use of art as therapy in mental illness, we look forward to learning from their discoveries and working toward our mutual goal of healthier future for Canadians.

### **University of Ottawa**

The University of Ottawa is proud to be a sponsor of the National Arts Centre's Roundtable on Mental Health and the Arts: an opportunity to explore how the arts can make a meaningful difference to the health and vitality of our country.

In October 2006, the University of Ottawa celebrated the opening of the new Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre and its affiliated research institute, the uOttawa Institute of Mental Health Research.

The University has made health one of its strategic areas of development in research and has also garnered a reputation for its commitment to creativity and focus on learning driven by innovation and excellence. Likewise, the arts play an integral part in the University's mandate of providing students with an unparalleled university experience that includes social involvement and community life.

Since 1848, the University of Ottawa has aspired to be, among universities, the essential reference on what Canada represents: a university that is an integral part of its community, open to the world and distinguished by its excellence in research.