



# SPARK MANUAL

## The Spark Coordinator and Presenting Performing Arts

[www.osac.ca/performing-arts/for-artscouncils/spark](http://www.osac.ca/performing-arts/for-artscouncils/spark)

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SASK LOTTERIES

Canada

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## 1. INTRODUCTION TO OSAC AND SPARK

### **What is OSAC?**

The Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils (OSAC) is an umbrella organization that enables community Arts Councils and schools to tour and hold live, professional music and theatre performances, visual arts exhibitions, workshops and special events across Saskatchewan. Community Arts Councils or *presenters*, as they are called in the business, have provided an attractive market for performers for many years. The aim of the Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils' (OSAC's) performing arts program is to assist Arts Councils to present live, high quality performances from all disciplines, to enhance the quality of life in Saskatchewan, and to develop a future audience for the performing arts.

### **SPARK**

Demographics across Saskatchewan are changing and so is the arts and culture landscape. Organizations are working towards being more inclusive and more diverse to reflect the communities they serve. The SPARK program is designed to engage people under age 29 as audiences, participants, and decision-makers and enable them to make an impact in their communities.

Meaningful youth engagement is more than seeing younger faces in the audience or having a token youth on the Arts Council; it is about genuine inclusion and allowing new members to participate in decision-making processes. The greater the sense of ownership and personal investment a person has in an endeavour, the more excited and engaged they are likely to be. Through this approach, SPARK aims to develop the next generation of performing arts presenters in Saskatchewan communities.

Taking on an entire season can be very intimidating for first-time arts presenters, but a single show with some guidance is much more manageable. By working with the local Arts Council's Performing Arts Coordinator as a mentor, the SPARK coordinator will select and present a show which they believe they can market to their peers.

### **Who are the OSAC Presenters?**

OSAC community presenters are Arts Council volunteers in communities that range in size from 500 to 200,000; the majority live in communities of less than 3,000. Every season, close to 40 communities throughout the province will book one or more shows through OSAC as part of the block booking process. Roughly 35 OSAC community presenters will put on a series of three or more shows.

### **Who is OSAC's SPARK's Audience?**

OSAC audience members represent a variety of ages (adult, family, and children), but the majority is typically middle-aged and older and very appreciative of having quality performances in their communities. The audience size can range from 50 to 60 (in a community of 500, that represents 10% of the population!) to 800.

The more important question is "*Who is SPARK's Audience?*", and that is up to you!

SPARK coordinators are strongly encouraged to select an artist, of high quality and within the Arts Council’s budget, who they believe they could market to their peers. What show would you and friends want to see? This may be the same type of show that the Arts Council currently presents or it may something a bit different.

## 2. MENTORSHIP

Mentorship is when an experienced and knowledgeable person works alongside an emerging person in the same field to help them in their professional development and to succeed in their goals. In the SPARK program, the mentor would be the Arts Council’s Performing Arts Coordinator or other qualified Arts Council member, the mentee is the SPARK Coordinator, and the shared goal is to present a live performing arts show in the community.

One of the principles of the SPARK program is that the mentor offers support, sound advice, and practical tools to empower the mentee to present a quality show, but in their own unique way. While working under the guidance of a mentor, the SPARK coordinator is encouraged to implement a few ideas of their own that may be new to the Arts Council.

### DO’S AND DON’TS FOR MENTEES

#### DO

- Be open to feedback you need to hear
- Be willing to make mistakes
- Ask for help when needed
- Work together to problem-solve
- Be open to the mentor’s perspectives
- Stay positive
- Reach out and touch base regularly

#### DON’T

- Only seek feedback on what you *want* to hear
- Take mistakes personally – you are both learning together
- be afraid to “bother” the mentor with “silly” questions
- Expect the mentor to have all the answers or solve all problems
- Be biased or jump to conclusions
- Get discouraged too easily when facing obstacles
- Assume that silence means everything is okay

### THE MENTOR AND THE MENTEE WORKING TOGETHER

Elements of the successful mentor-mentee working relationship:

**Mutual Respect and Understanding.** A priority in mentorship is having a positive relationship in which both participants feel a sense of trust and that their opinions are heard. Being approachable and unbiased opens up opportunities for more honest questions and feedback.

**Availability and Commitment.** Both the mentor and mentee must respect the time that the other is dedicating to the program. Be available and accessible, respond in a timely manner, and honour commitments so that the other person knows that their time is not being wasted. Give notice in advance if you are delayed on a certain task or unable to make a meeting.

**Communication Plan.** Regular communication is important in keeping both parties on the same page. At the start of the program, it may be helpful to agree on how Mentor-Mentee meet-ups will happen (ex: in person, over the phone, or email) and roughly how often they will take place. While it is important to be flexible, having this conversation early on will ensure that expectations are aligned and help prevent misunderstandings down the road.

**Clear Communication and Active Listening.** Mentorship is not a lecture in which the more experienced person projects everything they know onto the less experienced person. Rather, communication between the mentor and mentee is a two-way street. Conversations are focused on learning from each other and sharing knowledge, experiences, and practical information. Listen actively, ask thoughtful and open questions, and clarify. Confirming any action steps is a good way to remain accountable to each other and stay on track.

**Follow-up.** Conversations are an invaluable piece of mentorship, but moving forward on the action steps is what gets things done. This means that both parties follow through on their commitments and report back on their progress. Provide positive feedback or a simple thank-you for tasks well done to show encouragement and appreciation.

## GETTING STARTED.

**First Meeting.** At the beginning of the mentorship, arrange a casual meeting to get to know each other and discuss the program. If you and the SPARK coordinator are not already well acquainted, allow time to get to know each other. Partnerships based in trust do not happen overnight. Every mentorship is different, and depending on how well acquainted you are with the SPARK coordinator, their familiarity with the Arts Council, and their experience working in presenting performing arts, this initial meeting may vary greatly across communities in the SPARK program. Some topics to cover may include:

- Introductions and sharing reasons for participating in SPARK
- Discuss how shows have traditionally been presented in the community, what concepts to keep, and new ideas to try. This may include but is not limited to: marketing, branding, media relations, ticket sales, target audience, program design, and other event details.
- Overview of the timeline for presenting the show. Make a checklist and set target deadlines.
- Agree on how often you will meet and best means of communication (phone, email, text etc). Exchange contact information.
- Allow time for questions!

**Throughout the program.** Every now and then, take a step back to evaluate how the mentorship is going.

- What is working well?
- Have successes been recognized and praised?
- What needs to be done differently?
- Are there any concerns and how can they be addressed?
- How can OSAC help?

### 3. GUIDE TO PRESENTING PERFORMING ARTS

The following guide is intended to give an overview of presenting performing arts and is adapted from the Performing Arts Handbook. The complete handbook is available at <http://osac.ca/index.php/about> under “Reports and Documents.”

#### ARTIST SELECTION AND BOOKING PROCESS

The selection process starts eleven months in advance of any particular season. Artist showcases are presented at Showcase in October every year to begin touring as early as September of the following year. Price Lists of performers interested in touring Saskatchewan are distributed to Arts Councils approximately one month prior to Showcase.

*Showcase is an annual, weekend conference held in late October. It consists of live performances, visual arts exhibitions, professional development workshops, the OSAC AGM, and networking. Arts Council Delegates watch showcases and talk to performers and managers in the contact room. At a members-only booking meeting, presenters work together to block book after choosing artists for their upcoming season.*

Presenters finalize their programming choices by November 30 and requests for tours are sent to the OSAC office where tour coordination takes place (i.e., all tour dates and fees are finalized.) The OSAC Performing Arts Coordinator acts as a liaison between presenters and performers and contracts the performers, coordinates the bookings and routes the tours on behalf of the presenters, for all performances on the tour.

Tour schedules are then prepared by OSAC and are sent to the presenters, usually by late January.

#### CONTRACTS

The Main Contract is signed between the performer and OSAC. The Sub Contract is signed between the Arts Council and OSAC.

The Sub Contract is sent via email to the Arts Councils signed by the Performing Arts Coordinator. A fully signed copy requiring two signatures from the Arts Council must be returned to OSAC. All technical information available is attached to the Sub Contract. Incomplete information (e.g. venue or time) must be completed by the Arts Council at this time. A contract is binding; any inconsistencies or problems must be communicated to the OSAC Performing Arts Coordinator as soon as possible.

#### **Show Cancellation.**

When an Arts Council has made the verbal commitment of booking a performer and dates have been set, it is imperative that any absolutely necessary cancellations be made when dates are being confirmed prior to brochure production time. It is difficult to cancel a performance once the contract has been signed by OSAC and the

performer. The fee is usually due to the performer if an Arts Council cancels. More information on cancellations can be found in the Performing Arts Handbook in Section 4.1.6.C.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRESENTERS

Once the dates are confirmed and the contracts have been signed, the planning of the show is the responsibility of the SPARK Coordinator, the SPARK Mentor, and the Arts Council. This includes: booking the venue, setting a budget, recommending accommodations and places to eat to the artist, planning the hospitality and any other contract obligations, venue set-up, and follow-up after the show. The OSAC Performing Arts Coordinator continues to stay involved in the tours, assisting the Arts Councils and performers as needed to ensure a smooth season.

➔ ***Refer to Tools and Templates 4.1 “Planning the Performance”***

## SETTING A BUDGET

Arts councils must pay OSAC the performer fee one month prior to the concert date. OSAC invoices Arts Councils for the performer fee plus the GST due.

Arts Councils are also responsible for paying the expenses of physically presenting the event, that is, the securing of a facility, paying for any equipment rentals needed, backstage hospitality, and for personnel to run the show. The budget must also take into account fees owed to SOCAN (Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada) and Re:Sound (the Canadian not-for-profit music licensing company dedicated to obtaining fair license compensation for artists/labels). More information on these fees can be found in the Performing Arts Handbook in Section 4.1.6.E.

Researching these costs and preparing a budget before the event will establish the financial criteria. Decide on a reasonable sales potential to see if it will cover proposed performer fees and other associated costs. Set some goals for audience size, profit, or break even. Fundraising events, donations from individuals, service organizations, and businesses may be necessary to keep the event in the black.

➔ ***Refer to Tools and Templates 4.2 “Sample Budget”***

## MARKETING AND ADVERTISING

Arts Councils are responsible for the advertising of their shows.

**Use of artist images.** If printing your own posters, brochures or other marketing items, please check with the OSAC Performing Arts Coordinator to be sure you are using authorized images and artist descriptions. Images found on Google or even the artist website may not be authorized for advertising.

**Mandatory Logos.** It is imperative that OSAC, SaskCulture, Saskatchewan Lotteries, and Government of Canada logos are used on all advertising and promotions. It is important to keep the general public aware of the types of

events those dollars support. Some artists are also required to include the Canada Council logo. Logos are available from the OSAC Office and website.

**Press Release.** OSAC issues a press release including a detailed tour schedule for each performer presented by Arts Councils approximately one month in advance of the first performance of the tour. Other types of press releases may be issued from time to time. A copy of the press release is sent to each Arts Council presenting the performance. Arts Councils can use the press release copy "as is" for the local first press release but should expand on the information and supply their local media people with more details about ticket prices, sales outlets, etc.

OSAC provides:

- ✓ block marketing, including the creation of posters and brochures
- ✓ media releases for all shows
- ✓ mass distribution of our quarterly newsletter
- ✓ online promotion through the OSAC Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and website

➔ **Refer to Tools and Templates 4.3 "Sample Advertising Campaign"**

## HOSPITALITY

Hospitality includes everything you can do to make your guests, the performers, feel welcome, from fruit and coffee in the dressing rooms to post-performance receptions. The OSAC circuit has a reputation across Canada for exceptional hospitality.

The performers may ask you to recommend accommodations. While you may book the necessary rooms, payment is the responsibility of the performers unless otherwise specified in your contract.

**Backstage.** Most performers appreciate having coffee, juices, and bottled water available in their dressing rooms. Often they will also request fresh fruit, cheese and crackers.

Sometimes the request is included in a rider attached to the contract and in this case, whatever they request must be supplied.

**Reception.** Performers are usually willing to meet briefly with the audience as a whole immediately after a performance, to sign autographs or answer questions. Most prefer smaller receptions following this where they can relax and enjoy visiting with the presenters. Don't pressure them to attend, sometimes they are just too tired.

It is thoughtful to extend an invitation (email or phone) before the tour if you are planning a function. You could put in a lot of work only to find that the performers have made other plans for after the show simply because they did not know about it.

**Food.** Providing meals is not required unless stated in the contract, however it is often appreciated. Many performers do not eat before performing, so they will be looking for a restaurant after the performance, and in many small communities finding an open one can be a challenge. Sandwiches, chili, or cold buffets are fine. Check with the performer or their agent in advance of the performance date to identify the accurate number to prepare food for and any dietary restrictions.

**Warm Welcome.** Find out when the performers will arrive. Have someone available to greet them, show them the venue, and deal with any questions that arise. Your helpfulness and attitude will be repaid in the quality of the performance. Warm hospitality ensures warm performers who perform to the very best of their ability and go on to the next place full of enthusiasm.

## REPORTING

**Performance Evaluation.** Arts Councils report on each event they present by completing the Performance Evaluation supplied by OSAC. This form is available on the OSAC website at <https://www.osac.ca/performing-arts/for-arts-councils/performance-evaluation> Take a look at the evaluation ahead of time to see what information is required, such as audience number, number of volunteers, and number of volunteer hours.

Did it go as planned? Were the goals met? What did audiences say about the performance? These audience quotes are vital for those that help to fund OSAC to understand the difference we are making.

**Spark Evaluation.** In addition to the performance evaluation, both participants are asked to complete the SPARK Program Evaluation. There are a couple different questions depending on whether one is a mentor or mentee. The official survey is online and the link will be sent, but the survey questions are included in Section 6 so that you know what to expect. Once the evaluations have been received from both parties, OSAC will disburse the Spark bursary.

## 4. TOOLS AND TEMPLATES

The following checklists, timelines, and templates are guidelines, not strict rules. They are generic and highly subject to change, depending on your particular Arts Council and community. Some may be your responsibility, while others may fall under the duties of the Arts Council Performing Arts Coordinator, Treasurer, or Communications Coordinator. You may find that there are items that do not apply or that there are things you'd like to add. Make it your own!

## Tools and Templates

### 4.1 PLANNING THE PERFORMANCE

#### Booking the Performance (begins one year prior to the start of the upcoming season):

- Study the OSAC Price List which is sent out in September
- Attend Showcase in October; see the artist showcases and attend the booking meeting with other delegates from your local Arts Council where tentative selections are submitted
- Selections are finalized by November 30
- Submit the Spark Application form
- Receive the tour schedule from the OSAC Performing Arts Coordinator in late January
- Book the venue as soon as dates are finalized

#### Once the Contract is in Place:

- Upon receipt of the contract from OSAC, read it thoroughly, checking to see if arrangements need to be made for a stage crew, special equipment, or piano tuning
- Prepare a projected budget. See 4.2
- Plan a publicity campaign. See 4.3

#### One month of the Performance:

- Performer Fee is paid to OSAC
- Recruit volunteers for:
  - venue set-up: \_\_\_\_\_
  - venue clean up: \_\_\_\_\_
  - ticket and merchandise table: \_\_\_\_\_
  - concession: \_\_\_\_\_
  - event emcee: \_\_\_\_\_
  - other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Create Programs
  - Check with the OSAC Performing Arts Coordinator that artist photos and descriptions are authorized
  - Ensure that OSAC, SPARK, Saskatchewan Lotteries, and Government of Canada logos are used on all advertising and promotions. Some artists are also required to include the Canada Council logo.
- Publicity Campaign. See 4.3

#### Two Weeks Prior to the Performance

- Advance the Performance. This is a phone call or email with the artist or their representative confirming the details of the performance day.
  - Confirm that the artist have booked their accommodations. While the Arts Council may book the rooms, payment is the responsibility of the artist unless otherwise specified in the contract.

- Find out when the performers will arrive. Plan to greet them, show them the venue, and deal with any questions that arise.
- Confirm their hospitality requirements.
- Invite the artist to the reception if you are holding one.

**Week of the Performance:**

- Publicity Campaign. See 4.3
- Print programs
- Confirm arrangements with volunteers
- Acquire beverages and snacks for concession/intermission/reception

**Day of the Performance:**

- Set up the venue if it is not yet ready for the show (chairs, ticket sales table, merchandise table, concession, cash float)
- Greet the performers when they arrive and show them the venue
- Set-up water, snacks, and other backstage requirements from the artist rider
- The following should be on hand:
  - Contacts list with artists/manager, volunteers, venue contact person, etc
  - Copy of contracts for reference
  - Cash & cheques
  - Schedule for the event

**During the Performance:**

- Introduction: Land Acknowledgement, Thank Sponsors, Introduce the Artist
- Intermission
- Record the number of people in the audience
- Record the number of tickets sold at the door
- Note audience response to include on the Performance Evaluation

**After the Performance:**

- Reception
- Promote the next Arts Council show or season; have posters, tickets and/or brochures available
- Venue clean-up
- Record cash flow from ticket sales, concession, etc

**Follow-Up:**

- Send reviews to the performer (newspaper article with date of issue and name of newspaper)
- Share reviews and/or photos on the Arts Council social media pages
- Send any thank you notes which might be appropriate, including to sponsors and volunteers
- Performance Evaluation – Complete and Submit to OSAC
- Spark Program Evaluation – Complete and Submit to OSAC

## Tools and Templates

### 4.2 SAMPLE BUDGET

Based on a performance which might cost \$1,000, the following budget is a model to work from:

<b>Expenses</b>				
Facility rental				\$500.00
Performer Fees				\$1,000.00
Advertising				\$200.00
Hospitality				\$100.00
Miscellaneous				\$200.00
(piano tuning, printing, SOCAN* fee etc.)				
<b>Total Expenses</b>				<b>\$2,000.00</b>
<b>Revenue</b>				
Ticket Sales	Ticket Price		# Tickets Sold	
Season Tickets - Adult	\$20.00		70	\$1,400.00
Season Tickets – Students	\$10.00		20	\$200.00
Door Sales	\$25.00		20	\$500.00
Donations/Corporate Sponsors				\$500.00
Performing Arts Grant				\$480.00
SPARK Grant				\$500.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>				<b>\$3,580.00</b>
<b>Profit</b>				<b>\$1,580.00</b>

## Tools and Templates

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### 4.3 SAMPLE PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN

Leading up to the event:

8 weeks

- Plan the campaign, including:
  - Posters and other print materials
  - Media coverage (local newspaper, radio, television)
  - Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok)
  - Contest details or tickets deals, if applicable
- Check with the OSAC Performing Arts Coordinator that artist photos and descriptions are authorized
- Ensure that OSAC, SaskCulture, Saskatchewan Lotteries, SK Arts and Government of Canada logos are used on all advertising and promotions. Some artists are also required to include the Canada Council logo.

5 weeks

- Issue first press release
- Send event details to be included in community events calendar (if not already done)

4 weeks

- Distribute posters
- Begin Social Media campaign

3 weeks

- Issue second press release
- Approach media with ideas for feature story, supplying them with a media kit of information
- Arrange interview (telephone is okay) with performer
- Invite media to event including reviewers
- Social Media - ongoing

2 weeks

- Place ads and public service announcements
- Social Media - ongoing

1 week

- Follow up on invitations to media
- Social Media – ongoing

## 5. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

“OSAC Performing Arts Handbook.” OSAC. Available at <http://osac.ca/index.php/about> under “Reports and Documents.”

## 6. SPARK EVALUATION

In addition to the performance evaluation, both participants are asked to complete the SPARK Program Evaluation. There are a couple different questions depending on whether one is a mentor or mentee. The official survey is online and the link will be sent, but the survey questions are included below so that participants know what to keep in mind throughout the program. Once the evaluations have been received from both parties, OSAC will disburse the Spark bursary.

- \*1. Please provide your name and Arts Council
- \*2. Which artist was presented through SPARK?
- \*3. I participated in SPARK as a:

### **SPARK MENTEES:**

- \*4. Prior to your role as Spark Coordinator, how involved were you with the Arts Council?
- \*5. How much do you see yourself being involved in the Arts Council in the future?
- \*6. Please describe what was done to advertise the show, sell tickets, and work with other volunteers to prepare for the show.
- \*7. Did you make specific efforts to market this show to your peers/people in your age group?
- \*8. How likely are you to consider presenting another performing arts show (either with the Arts Council or in any other capacity in the future?)

### **SPARK MENTORS**

- \*9. In what ways was the preparation for the SPARK performance different from other Arts Council shows with regards to advertising, ticket sales, and working with other volunteers?
- \*10. Did the SPARK Coordinator make specific efforts to market this show to their peers/people in their age group?

\*11. How different was the audience of the SPARK show from other Arts Council shows?

\*12. How did youth engagement (as audience and volunteers) in the SPARK show compare to that of other regular Arts Councils shows?

\*13. How much did the Arts Council benefit from this experience?

\*14. How likely are you to consider being a mentor again?

#### **SPARK PROGRAM**

\*15. Were the workload and responsibilities required of you reasonable?

\*16. Were your responsibilities clearly defined?

\*17. Would additional training or resources have helped you in your role?

18. Please share any comments regarding roles and responsibilities in the SPARK program.

\*19. Please rate your experience working in a mentorship relationship.

\*20. Did you find there was an appropriate amount of contact between the mentor and mentee?

21. Is there anything you suggest that OSAC do to help SPARK Coordinators in their role?

22. Is there anything you suggest that OSAC do to help Arts Council Performing Arts Coordinators in their role as mentors?

\*23. Did you gain personally from this experience?

\*24. What contributions or successes are you most proud of from this experience?

\*25. How would you rate the SPARK program overall?

26. What did you like the best?

27. What did you like the least?

28. Please share any additional comments on any aspect of your experience with OSAC and SPARK.

\*29. Does OSAC have your permission to include quotes from this evaluation as testimonials in future reports?