
Performing Artists Speak: Three Short Films About the Transformative Power of Giving

This is the fourth installment in [our series](#) about arts and culture philanthropy. The series is published as a collaboration between The Philanthropist and The Metcalf Foundation.

Three videos. Three extraordinary and diverse companies. In these short films, we hear from the artistic and administrative leadership of Peggy Baker Dance Projects, The Musical Stage Company, and Why Not Theatre. They address questions such as: What role has philanthropy played, and what role does it continue to play in adding value to their creative visions? How do these artists and managers see the connection between their art, their audiences, and their relationships with philanthropy? And finally, what advice would they give to philanthropists about how to engage with the arts? Cutting between interviews and performance footage, these compelling videos go straight to the heart of these questions.

[Peggy Baker Dance Projects](#)

For artistic director and choreographer Peggy Baker “a gift by a philanthropist can just be the turning point for an artist.” And she knows whereof she speaks. “I’ve been lucky in the last few years to have some extraordinary individuals investing in my work in a way that’s allowed it to flourish, beyond even what I was dreaming,” says Baker. Because a relationship between the philanthropist and artist is profoundly personal, Producer and Manager Meredith Potter encourages philanthropists who want to engage in the arts to go and see a lot of work “and just become a monster fan of what they do. . . give them all the support you can!”

The Musical Stage Company

Mitchell Marcus, artistic and managing director, founded The [Musical Stage Company](#) in 2004 in order to create a home for musical theatre in Toronto, a place where “local artists can develop their skillset.” The gift of philanthropy has allowed the company to tell provocative and important stories, invest in local writers and local artists, and bring musical storytelling into the community with school programs. For Marcus, philanthropists make a big difference at a community level, an institutional level, and for individual artists. Erin Schachter, executive director of advancement, echoes Marcus’s sentiments. “You’re changing lives! Whether it’s one life or it’s an audience-full.”

Why Not Theatre

Ravi Jain, artistic and general director of [Why Not Theatre](#), has a radical approach to theatre. “Theatre for me is about revolution; it’s a tool for social change . . . to inspire people to just dream bigger, better worlds.” He and his team faced an uphill battle raising money, and working with philanthropists was a game changer. “The significance of a gift to someone who is at the base of the pyramid, who is at that emerging stage is really impactful,” says Executive Producer

Kelly Read.