

SPARC SYMPOSIUM 2020

Call For Proposals

SPARC (Supporting Performing Arts in Rural & Remote Communities) is a network of creators, presenters, producers, and community animators whose purpose is to ignite and help sustain performing arts in rural and remote communities across Ontario.

The **SPARC Symposium** is a biennial opportunity for a face to face gathering of the SPARC Network and creators, presenters, producers, community animators, and funders involved in the performing arts in rural and remote communities in Ontario and across Canada.

The **2020 SPARC Symposium** will be held May 7 – 10, 2020 in Six Nations of the Grand River, Ontario at the Gathering Place by the Grand. For more information about the host community and site, visit www.gatheringplacebythegrand.ca and www.sixnationstourism.ca.



The intent of the SPARC Symposium is to attract a broad spectrum of rural performing arts creators, producers, presenters and animators from a wide mix of art forms (dance, media arts, theatre and music) with a variety of skillsets (organizational management, audience development, inclusionary community engagement, etc.) to collaboratively consider their experience in order to improve it. The Symposium is structured in a way that allows for exchange, discussion and informal networking; it encourages peer to peer knowledge sharing - in workshop sessions and facilitated group activities; and there is a focus on participant engagement throughout. It is important to us that the SPARC Symposium provides attendees with a range of practical tools that will translate to the ignition of performing arts in their own communities.

SPARC SYMPOSIUM 2020 THEME

“Reconciliation & Connection”

The theme of Reconciliation & Connection means exploring what reconciliation means to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous creators, presenters, producers and community animators, and how that connects us. By looking at reconciliation we can see how the Indigenous experience differs from the Canadian experience, and what that means for cultural exchange and artistic expression. In bringing in the theme of Connection, we not only explore how we can build lasting relationships together, but also connect with our wider audiences through engagement, digital media, marketing and more.

Topics

SPARC invites proposals written in French and/or English, to be presented in French, English and/or an Indigenous language; we plan to video record and stream presentations and have them available in English, French, and an Indigenous language for long-term access.

Applicants are encouraged to be creative! With focused and enthusiastic creators and presenters in attendance, we encourage applicants to think outside-the-box, and offer creative and engaging formats in which to present their topic. Presentation formats are flexible and open to the applicant. They could include,

but are not limited to, workshops, panels, presentations, or interactive sessions (ex. jigsaw sessions, campfire/storytelling format, cooperative group sessions, etc). See full submission details at the end of this document.

Please submit proposals within the following topics:

Reconciliation in Action

What does reconciliation mean? What does it mean to the arts? How can the 94 Calls to Action be applied in our communities through artistic representation? Presenters in this stream should offer programs and resources for attendees that specifically address the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and offer examples of how they can be applied in practice.

Culturally Appropriation vs. Appreciation

When does an appreciation of one's culture, art, language or music become appropriation? Often equated with colonialism, cultural appropriation is considered harmful and marginalizes the original culture's beliefs and practices. Presenters in this stream should offer specific examples of this phenomenon as they relate to the arts, and how specific steps and measures can be taken to avoid appropriation in the future.

Indigenous Cultural Competency

Key to engaging and working with Indigenous communities, is understanding how history has impacted and continues to affect Indigenous people. Presenters in this stream should discuss constitutional, political, and social barriers for Indigenous people in the arts, and how this shapes the Indigenous experience as it pertains to performers, presenters, producers and creators.

Indigenous Community Engagement and Outreach

Working with Indigenous communities is essential on the road to reconciliation. But how do we begin? Presenters in this stream should discuss and provide examples of effective relationship and partnership building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

Production and Technical Direction in Rural Communities

Working in rural communities presents many challenges for arts presenters and creators, specifically as it relates to production and technical direction. How can barriers be overcome while still being mindful and respectful of the art and artistic space? Presenters in this stream should offer and speak to new technologies, resources, or programs that can assist presenters in rural areas.

Event Creation and Engagement

The stage is set, the lights are on, but where is your audience? Arts presentation can be arduous in rural communities. From limited budgets to lack of staff, enticing attendance can sometimes be a difficult task. Key to this is making your performance an "event". Presenters in this stream should offer practical solutions for audience engagement and connection including, but not limited to, effective marketing strategies, social media management, and cultivating the audience experience.

Accessing Funds

With limited pools and resources, accessing funds in rural communities can be strenuous on the arts community. How can you source sustainable funding, while also creating mutually beneficial relationships with your funders and sponsors? Presenters should discuss effective grant-writing strategies, resources to access and find grants, provide examples of successful sponsorship and donor recognition, and guidelines for approaching funders and sponsors.

Connection in A Digital Age

Every year technology advances at a fast-pace, at times surpassing previous technologies before they are utilized effectively in the field. How are creators and producers able to capitalize on and navigate the digital world to create, connect and access? Presenters should provide examples of successful implementation of digital strategies in the arts, and how this has created a greater connection to the larger arts industry.

Tourism and the Arts

Presenters in this stream should offer practical solutions for utilizing and connecting with the tourism industry in rural areas. This could include how to identify and work with regional tourism organizations (RTO's), creating partnerships within the tourism industry, and providing examples of effective relationships. Presentations should also speak to the challenges of tourism in rural and remote communities, and how the tourism industry can connect presenters and creators with a larger audience.

Knowledge Gained and Lessons Learned

With the challenges that face the arts in rural communities, it is important to celebrate our achievements. What event changed the arts scene in your rural community? How did it succeed? What challenges were overcome? What were the outcomes? Presenters in this stream should profile and showcase a successful initiative/event/program and speak to the planning process, share knowledge, and offer suggestions for attendees to utilize in their own communities.

Types of Sessions

Our focus is on maximizing learning from every presentation, so the last 30 minutes of each 90-minute time slot will be devoted to reflection on the material presented. This will be led by an external facilitator, with the goal of helping participants clarify their understanding and figure out how the lessons learned might be applied or adapted to their circumstances. We want also to share the broadest possible spectrum of experience and balance interests and learning preferences.

The formats may be seminars (primarily lecture style), workshops (hands-on learning), panels (up to three perspectives on a shared theme), research or community 'bytes' ('quick clicks' on studies or projects). You may incorporate elements of performing arts in your presentation within these formats. The SPARC Symposium Program sub-committee reserves the right to suggest a change in format and to recommend combinations of presentations to accommodate the goals of breadth and balance.

Submissions Must Include

- Name, position, organization (if applicable), address, phone and e-mail
- A statement of how your community is rural
- Title of the session
- Proposed format
- A sentence explaining how the proposed topic relates to a symposium stream
- A description of the session (max 500 words) that describes how you will use your experience to explore the topic stream, with a focus on lessons learned that may be adaptable to or instructive in other circumstances. This should be suitable for inclusion in the Symposium program (may be edited for style and clarity by SPARC staff)
- Your best guess at what three things in your presentation participants are most likely to find useful
- Brief biographical sketch (100 words maximum) of the lead speaker, and names, e-mail address and equally brief bios of co-presenters

- A list of audio-visual equipment needed (speakers are asked to bring their own laptops)

Please adhere strictly to the submission guidelines. Not meeting the guidelines may render your submission ineligible.

Selection Process

The SPARC Symposium Program sub-committee will select submissions using the following criteria:

- Clear, specific, informative content that supports symposium goals
- An approach to the subject material that is engaging
- Achieving a balance among the presentations as a whole
- Reflecting the diversity and richness of performing arts practice in rural communities

Attending the Symposium

SPARC will cover the registration fees of confirmed speakers. Financial assistance for travel and accommodation for speakers, and all registrants, may be available but is not guaranteed. Please note that SPARC expects workshop leaders, speakers and presenters to do their best to attend the entire symposium and participate fully in all sessions and activities.

Call Deadline

All submissions must be received no later than **Thursday October 31, 2019 at 5PM EST**.

Submission Format

Must be in Word format. Submit via email to: events@gatheringplacebythegrand.ca.

Questions?

Email or call:

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