

## Open Letters to the Ontario Arts Council

**When *Take One* applied to the OAC in 1997, we asked our subscribers for letters of support, if they chose to write them. What follows is a sample of those letters. Some have been edited for length.**

I was both surprised and saddened to learn that the OAC cut funding to *Take One* by 100 per cent in 1996. I'm surprised by the OAC decision because of the versatility of *Take One*. As an instructor of Canadian studies, I have found the magazine an invaluable research tool: *Take One* has provided indispensable information for my teaching and for an article on Canadian film history which I am currently writing. My husband has found it equally valuable for the selections he makes as a member of the organizing committee of the Kamloops Canadian and International Film Festival. Together, we rely on *Take One* to guide us in our television and movie viewing. In fact, *Take One* is the only magazine to which we have a home subscription. A magazine with such a healthy blend of popular and scholarly appeal is a rarity and I urge you to reinstate funding for the publication that the *Globe and Mail* recently called "an invaluable compendium of information on film in Canada."

**Ginny Ratsoy,  
University College of the Cariboo, Kamloops,  
B.C.**

I write in response to the news that the Ontario Arts Council has severed its support for *Take One*. These are indeed miserable times for culture in our country and it seems that the Ontario and Albertan provincial governments feel quiet at home with the notion that we, as Canadians, will remain a healthy and strong constituency brought up and fed on American culture. With 93 per cent of our screens monopolized by that single country and of the remaining seven per cent, only three revealing Canadiana, *Take One* is indeed an important if not crucial means by which we may, at least indirectly, absorb our own stories. For those who live in regions that, due to population density, find themselves strained to see any Canadian film, *Take One* fills a huge cultural bunker. *Take One* is our magazine, a celebration of a struggling and ill-supported cultural industry—film. I sincerely hope to see your magazine continue to arrive regularly at the post box. Thank you for your commitment to Canadian film.

**Michele L,  
Mermaid Movies, Calgary, Alta.**

In 1996 you cut all support for *Take One*. I was very disappointed by this decision. A recent filmmaker subscriber, I wait for every issue impatiently. I read *Take One* from cover to cover and can identify with and enjoy its totally Canadian aspect. The articles are stimulating and informative. Your agency should continue to support this unique publication. We should support Canadian independent filmmakers. *Take One* is not only an important information provider on Canadian films and filmmakers, it is well written and is a professional publication in every way. It reflects the true talent and nature of Canadian films and filmmakers and it deserves your full support.

**Beve Gardner,  
Thornrose Pictures, Regina, Sask.**

I am writing you to protest the 100 per cent cut in Ontario Arts Council funding to *Take One* magazine. I recall the founding of [the original] *Take One* magazine in the 1960s by cinephile Peter Lebensold. The current editor, Wyndham Wise, carries on the tradition of excellence in film journalism Mr. Lebensold established at that time. Canadian films have been in the forefront of our national culture since after the Second World War. As a resident of Montreal in the 1960s, I recall Claude Jutra's *A tout prendre*, works by Arthur Lipsett, Don Owen, Robin Spry and the premieres of many exciting NFB documentaries and dramas. Later, I wrote about film for the *Globe and Mail*, interviewed many Canadian film directors and reported on the founding of the Canadian Film Development Corp., now

Telefilm Canada. I love reading and writing about films, and *Take One* fills my need for a major magazine about the film industry that reports in depth on Canadian film production. *Take One's* writers are intelligent and knowledgeable. *Take One's* format is glossy and impressive as befits a national cinema. *Take One* regularly publishes articles by top journalists like Brian D. Johnson and Geoff Pevere—writers recognized internationally as authorities in the field of film writing, whose work is a joy to read. And *Take One's* regional correspondents provide up-to-date news of the Canadian film industry from sea to sea. I view the decision to cut *Take One's* OAC funding by 100 per cent as destructive and perverse. Like many magazines produced in Toronto, *Take One's* readership is national. The Ontario Arts Council should welcome the opportunity to support such a high-quality magazine—a magazine that embodies the excellence the Canadian film industry seeks to attain. *Take One* fully deserves to be funded by the OAC. By targeting *Take One*, the Ontario government escalates its attack on the Canadian film industry, much of which is based in Toronto—attacks that ignore the global importance of the Canadian film industry in both cultural and economic terms. As a member of the Periodical Writers' Association of Canada and the Writers' Union of Canada, I will not stand by and let a provincial government destroy a national voice. Nor will I stand by while an indifferent provincial government blows apart an industry born from years of effort by Canada's most talented individuals whose products are now recognized around the world. At this very moment, we who work in, support and enjoy the Canadian film industry are working hard to ensure that, in spite of the senseless actions of the Ontario government, the magazine *Take One* will survive and indeed prosper in the coming years.

**Melinda McCracken,  
writer, Winnipeg, Man.**

On behalf of the Ottawa Film Society (OFS), I wish to protest the 100 per cent funding cut imposed on *Take One* by the Ontario Arts Council. Such drastic action is completely uncalled for, especially in light of the fact that other publications have had only partial funding cut by the OAC. *Take One* plays a very significant role in its presentation of information related to the Canadian film industry. While there is a veritable wealth of more-than-you-ever-wanted-to-know about American films on the newsstands, there are very few publications dedicated to providing background and information related to films produced in our own country. The need for a magazine such as *Take One* is even greater than ever given that the

magazine industry, like others, is facing downsizing, cutbacks and decrease of funding—in this case the decrease being 100 per cent. As the archivist and a film programmer for the OFS, I frequently refer to and rely on *Take One* as an invaluable source of information. This magazine consistently provides an interesting perspective on the Canadian scene and the quality of its content and production is always first-rate. On a number of occasions I have used this magazine as a source of contacting individuals and actually tracking down the distribution rights of certain films. I urge you to take the time to reevaluate your decision to cut off all funding of *Take One*. This magazine is too important in its presentation and preservation of Canadian film culture to lose through lack of financial support.

**Jim Croft for the Ottawa Film Society,  
Ottawa, On.**

I was shocked and angered to learn that the Ontario Arts Council has dropped *Take One* from its small but necessary subsidy-assistance list. Why is this? When other publications, indeed the Arts Council itself, have only been (brutally) dropped by 40 per cent? The "Harrass" government is cruel, unthinking and dangerously destructive in its handling of the bottom line. It cares little for things cultural. But why, oh why, would the literature jury be equally cruel? Surely not because *Take One* is not a literacy magazine per se? *Take One* is a quality periodical, a damn good, very readable, informative and stimulating take on Canadian filmmaking; the only one in English that I am aware of. Recent issues have also provided an invaluable historical service, surveying 100 years of filmmaking and its filmmakers in our culturally denied country. Film in Canada is desperately important to thousands of us. Please, please advise your jury of our deep concern with such arbitrary and heartless actions.

**David Gardner,  
actor/director/teacher, Sutton West, On.**

I am writing in support of the application by the film magazine *Take One* for funding by your agency. The New Brunswick Filmmakers' Co-op is a member-based film cooperative that assists independent filmmakers much like LIFT does in Toronto. Our co-op has been a subscriber to *Take One* since its inception. Members find it to be an important and relevant publication. It provides a different take on filmmaking in Canada than commercial industry newspapers like *Playback*. It provides in depth coverage of filmmakers producing culturally significant work from across the country. As regional filmmakers, this connection to colleagues elsewhere is

vital to our growth. Canadian cinema has struggled for identity next to Hollywood for over 100 years. *Take One* is helping us to forge our identity and create a community in the independent sector which we can all be proud of. I hope you will once again recognize the fine work of the people of *Take One*.

**Tony Merzetti for the New Brunswick Filmmakers'  
Co-op, Fredericton, N.B.**

I am writing to support the application of *Take One* magazine. It is an excellent magazine that concentrates solely on Canadian film, with an emphasis on drama. For this reason alone, it is an essential publication. It is water in the desert. *Take One* also carries in-depth interviews with filmmakers, film reviews and insightful essays about cinema in this country. I know that money is tight but hope the Ontario Arts Council will reconsider and support *Take One*, which is the only English-language magazine of its kind.

**Colleen Murphy,  
director/writer,  
Subjective Eye Inc., Toronto, On.**

I understand that the Ontario Arts Council has eliminated totally the grant to *Take One*. While I am sympathetic to the economic problems of our provincial government and the necessity to make difficult decisions, surely a total elimination of such a grant while other publications have only had their grants reduced is inappropriate and unfair. *Take One* is an extremely valuable publication for one of Canada's, and more particularly Ontario's, best growth industries. It is a magazine that is useful not only to the local production community in Ontario but as a means of attracting interest in Ontario as a production location for American and European producers, producers who bring tens of millions of dollars a year to Ontario with the concomitant contribution to Ontario tax receipts. We would certainly expect the Ontario Arts Council to reconsider this decision with respect to *Take One* and restore some appropriate portion of its grant.

**David M. Perlmutter, producer,  
Chesler/Perlmutter Productions,  
Toronto, On.**

I am an avid reader of *Take One* magazine and I certainly hope that this excellent publication will receive a grant from the Ontario Arts Council. I can only speculate about your reasons for denying *Take One* support last year. Could it be that you place it in the ranks of "film industries" and believe that it could and should be self-supporting? In my too many years

within the film and television industry, numerous publications have come and gone. As each has tumbled (due to the financial difficulty of continuing) there has been a grave setback in the maturation and quality of Canadian production. We need what *Take One* provides: scholarly criticism and reviews; production information; contemporary views; current state-of-the-industry reports, etc. We need to feel as if we are part of a community; individual voices on a shared frontier. The story of my movie *The Midday Sun* was the cover article in the last or next to last issue of *Cinema Canada* and of *Atlantic Insight*. Must I never make another movie for fear of destroying a magazine? Please help make *Take One* financially solid. No doubt it needs all the help it can get and it deserves it because of its excellence.

**Lulu Keating, writer/director, Red Snapper Films,  
Halifax, N.S.**

It has recently come to my attention that the OAC eliminated all of its funding support for *Take One* magazine in 1996. I am writing not only as a loyal subscriber but also as a member of the academic community who teaches and researches film and television in this country. As well, I regularly review Canadian films for both the CBC and *Canadian Forum*. This letter is nothing less than a wholehearted plea to the OAC to renew its funding commitment to *Take One*. Understandably, in tough, restraining times some cuts need to be made by bodies such as the OAC, but it is hard to believe that the Council has so radically removed all support for such a fine and necessary publication. I cannot stress enough how large an information vacuum *Take One* fills in this country, nor can I overstate the importance of a national magazine devoted exclusively to the media of film and television. Canadian culture can easily be seen to be under siege much of the time by global market pressures so it is especially dismaying to know that Canadian funding bodies themselves might be contributing to such an uneasy state of affairs. *Take One* has long proven itself to be of highly professional quality, informative, surprisingly creative in its design and presentation and, for me, a valuable source of up-to-date commentary on the evolving film and television industry. As a resident of Newfoundland I especially appreciate the national reach of the magazine, an achievement in itself. I should think the OAC would not only approve of such comprehensiveness, but also be proud to sponsor an Ontario product with such wide appeal.

**Noreen Goffman,  
associate professor,  
Memorial University of Newfoundland,  
St. John's, Nfld.**