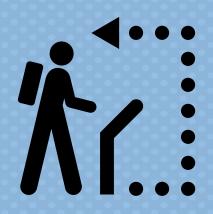
BAM! Complete Guide to Block Booking

by Robert Baird



#20

A guide for artists, agents, managers, and presenters

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BAM! Complete Guide to Block Booking

What is Block Booking?

Block Booking is three or more presenting organizations coordinating to book an artist or artistic group, making an offer which pools the combined individual offers of the "block" and offering performances along a route and in a timeframe beneficial to the artist.

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Introduction

Block Booking is little understood and variously practiced in North America. Often it is merely a number of presenters who wish to book an artist and who try to set up a routing that works for the asking fee. Sometimes, block booking is encouraged by an artist agency or by an arts organization by providing indications of interest, availability and fee range, etc. but the actual booking of the block is the responsibility of the artist or the agency or individual presenters.

There are several components to the block booking process: promotion of artists (either self-promotion or agency representation), membership in local, regional and national arts organizations, attendance at arts conferences, showcasing at arts conferences, and inclusion in touring directories,.

This guide will review examples of block booking in North America (Canada and the United States), outline principles upon which a successful block booking program should be based and provide an outline of block booking procedures.

Thank you to Kate Gracey-Stewart, Angela Campbell and Judy Harquail for their time and sharing of information and to my Michigan block booking colleagues Katie Trzaska and Mike Nadolski.

Block Booking Networks (Canada)

British Columbia

ArtStarts in Schools

ArtStarts in Schools is a charitable organization that seeks to expand the role of arts in education for the benefit of British Columbia's young people.

Since 1996, ArtStarts has supported educators, artists, families and young people by offering a broad range of programs, services and resources.

ArtStarts' key areas of activity include booking school performances, an annual showcase conference for young audience presenters, artist residencies, grants to schools and districts, professional learning opportunities for artists and teachers, gallery exhibitions of young people's art and free family programming. From Kindergarten to Grade 12, in public and private schools throughout the province, ArtStarts supports a wide range of arts based experiences that activate learning for young people.

The ArtStarts Showcase is Western Canada's most important performing arts showcase and conference for school and community arts programmers interested in booking performances for young audiences.

From dancers and storytellers to musicians and theatre groups, the range of performing artists presented at the ArtStarts Showcase always proves to be diverse, engaging and of the highest calibre.

ArtStarts in invites performing artists from all disciplines—music, dance, theatre, storytelling, interdisciplinary and more— to apply to perform at the annual ArtStarts Showcase and be positioned to tour BC schools.

Apply to Showcase:

https://artstarts.com/showcase-application

Two Directories:

Artists on Tour:

https://artstarts.com/aotd

https://artstarts.com/aicd

BC Touring Council

Membership in the BC Touring Council offers Presenter/Venues and opportunity to participate in block booking meetings and have access to block booking interest lists and assistance with identifying block booking opportunities

At the annual conference Pacific Contact (http://bctouring.org/pacific-contact) held in the spring there is a **BC Regions Block Booking Meeting** for BC presenters who wish to meet fellow presenters and BCTC to coordinate block booking.

Membership information can be found here:

http://bctouring.org/about/membership

Information on showcasing at Pacific Contact can be found here:

http://bctouring.org/pacific-contact/showcase-application

BCTC also provides a number of Directories which can aid in the block booking process:

<u>ArtsOnTour</u>

ArtsOnTour is a directory of artists and companies available for touring in British Columbia. It also lists agents and representatives. Visit the special ArtsOnTour website.

Presenters Directory

These listings represent members of the BC Touring Council that are classified as "presenters." If you are a presenter and would like to be listed, contact us about becoming a member.

Members of the BCTC can also receive a detailed and complete list of presenters that contains email addresses, phone numbers, mailing address etc. See the directory...

Venues Directory

A list of British Columbia performance venues with information about seating, technical and other details related to the performances spaces. See the directory...

Youth Friendly Venues

As part of the <u>Aspiring and Emerging Artists Initiative</u>, BCTC has created an inventory of youth friendly venues in BC. The majority of venues are appropriate for young people ages 15-34 years old. <u>See the directory...</u>

Regional Map of British Columbia

Alberta

Alberta Showcase is an annual arts marketing conference that brings together rural presenters from over 100 different communities. The presenters are shopping for artists for their subscription series, festivals and community events. These delegates appreciate the arts and are avid cultural consumers. Many work with volunteer groups in their communities – all who travel to various cultural events throughout the province on a regular basis.

Showcasing artists are featured at Alberta Showcase. Information on showcasing:

https://www.artstouring.com/alberta-showcase/showcase-applications/

Block Booking provides presenting members with programming opportunities to book artists in partnership with other presenting members. A block-booked tour is when the artist/company does not return home between engagements/bookings on the tour because the block-booked tour occurs over consecutive dates.

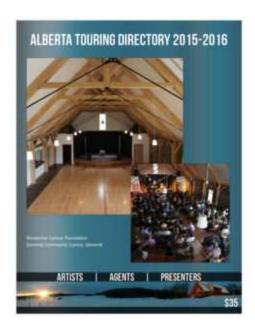
It requires a collaborative effort between a minimum of three presenters who must select a *Lead Presenter* to anchor the tour and bargain collectively with the artist(s)/agency(s) on behalf of the presenters participating in the block-booked tour.

Through this focused approach of strategic scheduling and routing of tours, Alberta presenters are able to connect more artists with more audiences throughout the Province, throughout the year. Artists benefit by reaching more communities in a given timeframe, making their tour more rewarding and cost efficient. Communities enjoy shows that they may not otherwise be able to access or afford, and we realize our vision of connecting Alberta's communities, celebrating and sharing the arts.

The **Arts Touring Alliance of Alberta** helps facilitate this process by providing presenters with networking opportunities, contact information in the **Alberta Touring Directory**, and a variety of tools on our website only available to members. However, we *do not* currently schedule block-booked tours or bargain on behalf of our presenting members in this capacity.

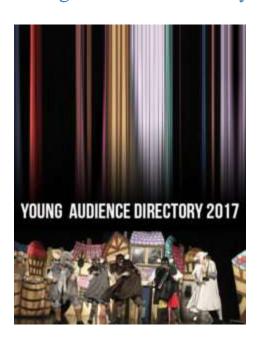
The Arts Touring Alliance of Alberta has a couple of useful publications to assist with Block Booking:

Alberta Touring Directory



A comprehensive directory featuring Arts Touring Alliance Member profiles, photos, and contact information for more than 180 touring acts and 100 professional presenters.

Young Audience Directory



A directory comprised specifically of Performing Artists and Artists interested in Residencies ideal for family friendly programming. If you are a school, community presenter, festival, or library looking for Artists you will want to check out this directory.

Arts Touring Alliance of Alberta membership information:

https://www.artstouring.com/about/services/membership-options/

Saskatchewan

Each October, the Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils presents its annual Showcase Conference. Showcase is an arts event for visual and performing arts, professional development, networking and so much more. Now in its 48th year, OSAC is pleased to offer the very best of performing and visual talent from Saskatchewan, across Canada and internationally. Along with all this OSAC also hosts its Annual General Meeting, provides a silent auction and raffle and hospitality throughout the weekend for socializing.

Delegates that come to Showcase come from across Saskatchewan, Canada and the United States. The weekend includes performing arts and school presenters, visual artists, managers, agents, OSAC Members and industry representatives and government funding partners.

Performing Arts Showcases

Juried showcases are twenty minutes long at Showcase. There were fourteen showcases and all performances were held at the Regina Performing Arts Centre.

TOURS

OSAC organizes tours of professional performing artists to communities and schools across Saskatchewan.

OSAC, at the direction of its member Arts Councils, negotiates, schedules, and contracts performances in Arts Council communities around the province. This process allows for efficient dealing with the artist and their representatives and block booking cost savings for the arts councils. Member arts councils discover many of these artists at the annual Saskatchewan Showcase of the Arts or through inclusion in an annual "Price List".

OSAC members are dedicated volunteers committed to making culture a vital

part of community life. They develop and encourage local interest in the arts and ensure a solid future for culture in our province.

ARTISTS TOURING 2017/2018

2017/2018 OSAC Performing Arts Schedule

2017/2018 OSAC Dates by Artist

2017/2018 OSAC Dates by Presenter

Stars for Saskatchewan

Stars for Saskatchewan is a 90 minute performance by high calibre performers from Saskatchewan, Canada and beyond in music, theatre or dance. These performances are often a highlight of the communities' cultural activities.

Koncerts for Kids

A show designed especially with families or children in mind, these 60 minute performances feature everything from music and puppetry to theatre and dance. These performances are often scheduled in the early evening, weekend afternoons or during school hours to accommodate the younger audiences.

OSAC also offers the Performing Arts in Schools School Touring Program http://osac.ca/images/touring with OSAC Performing Arts in Schools.pdf

Manitoba

Each October, at our annual <u>Manitoba Showcase</u> event, we preview 15 live performances by a selection of artists from across the country. Hosted in a different Manitoba community each year, Manitoba Showcase brings together

members of our regional arts network, including concert series presenters, provincial arts councils, arts educators, industry representatives and other arts programming organizations, to preview acts they may wish to bring to their own communities.

Manitoba Arts Directory | mbartsdirectory.ca

Every fall, the Manitoba Arts Network has published an annual directory of artists interested in booking performances and touring Manitoba. The directory has traditionally been provided to delegates attending the Manitoba Showcase conference while also being made available for download via our website.

Hosted by the Manitoba Arts Network, the <u>Manitoba Arts Directory</u> is an online directory, event listing and news publishing platform dedicated to serving the Manitoba arts and cultural community. The site was created to serve as a hub drawing together artists, arts presenters, and arts lovers in a one-stop-shop for everything arts & culture related in Manitoba. The <u>Manitoba Arts</u> <u>Directory</u> includes artist and arts industry listings, arts and cultural events listings, and arts news from all of Manitoba's arts communities.

Artists of all types can benefit from this promotional tool with a wide variety of listing types available to suit all budgets. Increased listing features such as image galleries, embedded video, social media integration and much more will allow artists to showcase themselves in the best light, helping them to connect with arts presenters and attract new audiences.

All applicants to Manitoba Showcase will receive a complimentary basic listing in the online Artist Directory along with discounted pricing on upgraded listings options.

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR NEW ONLINE ARTIST & EVENT DIRECTORY

Touring Artists & Bookings

The Performing Arts Touring Program assists both community presenters and showcase artists by coordinating block-booked tours and one-time performances in Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario. Our performing arts program coordinator

follows up on interest generated from our annual Showcase event to coordinate show bookings for the following year.

The fees to presenters, associated with Manitoba Arts Network's booking program vary between members and non-members - members receive a discounted fee of five per cent of the performance fee, while non-members pay seven-and-a-half per cent of the performance fee. Our Northern members pay a "blanket" fee of \$100.00 per year.

Visit our <u>Book a Performance</u> page for more information on artist show fees and our block booking process.

Ontario

Ontario Presents has the most sophisticated block booking process in North America, in my estimation. Under the guidance of Judy Harquail, Ontario organizes hundreds of performances in multiple block booking tours throughout the province. As block booking coordinator, Judy also organizes conference calls bi-weekly where presenter members have an opportunity to discuss art and artists and decide on which artists will be block booked and how the tours will work, especially if a give-and-take is required for catchment overlap. The members will also designate presenter-members to attend arts conferences throughout North America and the world to take in artist showcases and make recommendations to the group. The amount of commitment, cooperation and connection is what accounts for the success of the block booking program in Ontario.

Ontario Presents' Block booking services provide presenting members with programming opportunities to book artists in partnership with other presenting members. Block booking services also offer assistance with tour co-ordination, contracting and marketing/promotion.

Each year, Ontario Presents members participate in the block booking process to develop the tours that would travel to their communities in Ontario. The tours

cross many disciplines of the performing arts including contemporary dance, young audience, theatre and music.

An average block booking season results with over 45 tours and 300 performances scheduled in member communities across Ontario.

See *ONtour* posts on our <u>blog</u> for more information on current tours. Please note, the **Tour Block Booking program is available to presenting organizations only**. Artists (or artist agents) do not have to be members of Ontario Presents to be booked through the program. Artists are selected by presenting members independently.

To participate in this program presenters are invited to join the network.

The Tour Block Booking Program utilizes software developed by Ontario Presents to facilitate the block booking process. This software has also been licensed to the Atlantic Presenters Association for their block booking use.

Ontario Booking Conference

Ontario CONTACT is Ontario's largest and longest running annual performing arts showcase and booking conference.



Every year Ontario Contact engages over 500 artists, presenters, workshop leaders, and various government and arts service agencies in showcase performances, workshops, and an arts industry marketplace. It is our goal that Ontario Contact will continue to address the on going needs of Ontario's cultural presenters, and assist local, national, and international artists and their agents to tour and perform for Ontario audiences. Ontario Presents is pleased to be

producing this 4-day conference and artist showcase platform, with assistance from the Ontario Arts Council, the Department of Canadian Heritage, and the generous support of our many sponsors. For more information visit the <u>Ontario CONTACT site</u>.

Showcasing at Ontario Contact

I Want to Showcase is a collaboration between <u>Ontario Contact</u> and <u>Contact East</u>, and their goal is simple: to offer artists applying to showcase a site that is easy to navigate, understand and use.

I Want to Showcase presents an easier way for performing artists to apply for showcase conferences. Through this joint showcase application, artists now have the opportunity to apply for one or more conferences online. List is as below:

- Alberta Showcase
- Arts Midwest
- Contact East
- Manitoba Showcase Contact
- Mid Atlantic Performing Arts Market
- Ontario Contact
- OSAC Showcase
- Ohio Arts Presenters Network
- Pacific Contact
- Performing Arts Exchange
- Western Arts Alliance

We welcome our partner conferences as they join us in working together for the benefit of our artists.

To start your application go to www.iwanttoshowcase.ca!

Block Booking Networks and Agency Examples (United States)

APCA (Association for the Promotion of Campus Activities)

APCA is directed towards colleges and universities and provides regional conferences and a national conference annually where artists can showcase and exhibit and be part of the cooperative buying program that APCA promotes to its school members. Throughout the year, APCA hosts leadership development workshops and campus events planning conferences. We offer top of the line educational sessions, exhibit halls, and live showcases. Our events provide your organization opportunities to network and meet new vendors and artists for your campus event planning needs. Last year, over 600 schools and 2000+ students and higher education professionals attended APCA conferences and institutes.

Join APCA: http://www.apca.com/users/users/campusApplication

Showcases

At APCA conferences, you'll experience live showcases by the best artists in the college market — musicians, campus speakers, comedians, magicians, etc. You'll have the opportunity to bring great talent back to your campus and save your budget with our APCA Cooperative Buying Program and onsite discounts.

Each conference delegate receives an event program complete with bios and pictures of the acts, lecturers, etc. Attendees can also browse performing acts online prior to the conference and preview videos and EPKs of the showcasing artists. Additionally, you can find all of this information in our mobile app, available for smartphones and tablets.

Exhibit Hall

During exhibit hall, network with fellow students and campus events planning professionals, book attractions and performers for your campus events, and receive the latest cool novelty items! Associates are APCA member agencies, artists, performers, speakers, etc. representing the showcasing attractions. All exhibiting associates are APCA members, and bound by APCA ethics and sensitivity guidelines. Conference exhibitors can be found in their booths during designated exhibit hall hours. They can answer questions, explain rider and contract terms, and generally give member schools all the information they need to bring an artist or vendor to their campus event. Typical booths will have bios, pictures, sample contracts and cooperative buying forms.

Cooperative Buying

http://www.apca.com/school/co-op-buying

Ariel Artists

Founded in 2009 by pianist and poet Oni Buchanan, and staffed by a collegial family of trained musicians with years of experience in management, promotion, and arts administration, Ariel Artists is an artist management company shaped by and designed for the evolving landscape of music in the 21st century.

On its site http://arielartists.com/

On its website this agency provides a summary of artists/regions/touring dates: http://arielartists.com/block-booking/

Arts Northwest (ANW)

The ANW Annual Booking Conference is held in October and produces a list of showcase artists and interest from presenters. Members can also access a block booking email blast opportunity:

<u>https://www.artsnw.org/block-booking.php</u>. ANW produces a directory of artists as well:

https://www.artsnw.org/about-northwest-on-tour.php

CA Presenters

The annual CA Presenters conference, open to Presenters only, provides Artist Information Exchange Sessions in various genres at which presenters discuss artists for booking and routing. In years past (I'm not sure if this is still done) there were opportunities for artist pitches of new touring projects and selected artists were funded for touring in California. A new feature of their site is the Interactive Tour Routing Map:

Interactive Tour Routing Map

Thanks to David Palmer, the general manager at SOKA Performing Arts Center, there is now an interactive tour routing map showing the locations of the presenting venues in California and surrounding states! Useful to agents, artists and presenters alike, the map can be accessed here. CP thanks David for his initiative and great work!

Michigan Presenters

Michigan Presenters, in collaboration with Ohio and Pennsylvania is in the process of setting up a block booking procedure. For more information: http://www.michiganpresenters.org/

Minnesota Presenters Network (MPN)

MPN stimulates cooperative projects through booking and block-booking information exchange, as well as access to diverse artists through reduced-price, cooperative booking. One meeting each year is devoted to a block-booking session – typically at the Arts Midwest Conference, held each year in September.

Membership Information:

Montana Performing Arts Consortium (MPAC)

MPAC hosts an annual Artist Showcase/Block Booking Conference in January. Each year representatives of approximately eighteen presenting organizations in Montana and Idaho, plus a like number of artists and management companies gather as a cost-effective way for marketing, booking, and continuing education. One of the goals of this consortium is to reduce expenses for artists and presenters through block-booking.

Showcase Application: http://mtperformingarts.org/app/artist-application/

NACA (National Association of Campus Activities

School and associate members have access to one of the largest campus activities networking and talent buying resources in the country. NACA holds an annual conference in February and several regional conferences throughout the year.

Membership Information:

https://www.naca.org/JOIN/Pages/AssociateMembership.aspx

North Carolina Presenters Consortium (NCPC)

ArtsMarket is held every two years in Durham NC and is primarily for showcasing, exhibiting and connecting.

The NCPC listserv is available to current members to ask questions, share news, and communicate about block booking. For complete instructions and information, members may view our <u>LISTSERV</u> page (login required).

Membership Information: http://ncpresenters.org/join.php

NY State Presenters Network

THE NEW YORK STATE PRESENTERS NETWORK is a presenter-driven organization developed to broaden access to artists, increase statewide touring and presenting, serve as a catalyst to develop performance opportunities for New York State based performing artists, and facilitate block booking and collaboration among presenters throughout the state.

For more information: http://www.nyspresenters.org/

Ohio Arts Professionals Network (OAPN)

Annual block booking conference held in the fall, focussed on professional development for all members, showcasing artists, marketplace and block booking. OAPN has developed a Block Booking process which connects all Ohio presenters and affords opportunities for artists, agents and managers to promote state tours.

For more information: www.oapn.org

PA Presenters

Established in 1987, Pennsylvania Presenters is a consortium of individuals, business and organizations dedicated to presenting and touring the live performing arts throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and its neighboring states. Members collaborate on programming, block booking and grant opportunities.

Events include:

Spring Conference and Retreat http://www.papresenters.org/conference-retreat/

Pitch Party

The goal of the pitch party is to be more productive for our presenters, agents, managers, and artists. The Pitch Party focuses on specific artists and projects that have been submitted by agents, managers, and artists for review and selected buy the presenter members.

http://www.papresenters.org/conference/pitch-party/information-foragentsartists/

MAPAM – Mid-Atlantic Performing Arts Conference, alternating with NCPC ArtsMarket.

http://www.papresenters.org/mapam/

Membership Information: http://www.papresenters.org/membership/shop/

South Arts

The Regional Touring program is an opportunity for presenting arts organizations in South Arts' nine-state region to receive fee support to present performing artists from outside of the presenter's state. Touring support is awarded to theatre, music, opera, musical theatre, and dance projects that contain both a public performance and an educational component. These grants are limited and very competitive. The maximum request is 50% of the artist fee, up to \$7,500 for dance projects or \$5,000 for all other projects.

Block-Booked Tour grants allow Regional Touring applicants to submit an additional application if a block-booked tour includes a minimum of three presenters from at least two states in the region. These grants are limited and we expect them to be very competitive. NOTE: Block-Booked Tour applicants are not required to submit a Regional Touring application in order to be eligible for this grant program. Read the Special Instructions for Block-Booked Tour applications.

https://www.southarts.org/grants/apply-for-a-grant/regional-touring/

Principles of Block Booking

The main requirements for block booking can be summarized as: Communication, Trust, Respect, Honesty, Collaboration, Ethical Behaviour

FOR PRESENTERS:

- 1. Minimum block is three presenting venues
- 2. Presenters must communicate frequently, at least once a month
- 3. Presenters must be proactive in seeking out touring artists
- 4. Presenters must be willing to share information
- 5. Presenters must give and take, especially where radius clauses overlap

FOR AGENTS, MANAGERS and ARTISTS:

- 1. Agents, Managers and Artists need to negotiate block booking fees
- 2. Agents, Managers and Artists need to be considerate of presenters and their needs/situation
- 3. Agents, Managers and Artists need to pitch specific touring projects, not the whole roster
- 4. Agents, Managers and Artists need to be aware that Presenters talk about artists and communicate with each other regarding artists' personality, show, issues, etc.

Block Booking Procedures

- 1. Need for someone to act as a Block Booking Coordinator: to build the tour routing, coordinate regular conference calls, negotiate as a "block" with artists or artist representatives (gross offer is made on behalf of block and once accepted, contracts are finalized between artist and each venue at fee put forward into block by venue)
- 2. Need for regularly scheduled conference calls accessible only to all presenter members interested in block booking
- 3. Need for regular email communication in sub-genres for block booking (young audiences, jazz, dance, etc.)
- 4. Need for access to a block booking software program which allows agents, managers and artists to submit information on touring projects, including tech and hospitality riders
- 5. Need for access to a block booking software program which allows presenters to input information on their venue, see which artists are touring and designate preferred artists for their programming with a view to reaching the minimum requirement for block booking (three or more presenters).
- 6. Need for opportunities for agents, managers, and artists to "pitch" their touring projects (conference opportunities, showcases, pitch sessions, access to block booking software (agent/manager/artist portion only).

Check out the other titles in the

BAM! COMPLETE GUIDES SERIES

BAM! Complete Guide to the PAC Market BAM! Complete Guide to Presenter Networks – Canada BAM! Complete Guide to Presenter Networks – U.S.A. BAM! Complete Guide to Professional Associations BAM! Complete Guide to Promotional Materials BAM! Complete Guide to the Schools Market – Canada BAM! Complete Guide to the Schools Market – U.S.A. BAM! Complete Guide to Self-Management BAM! Complete Guide to Self-Presenting BAM! Complete Guide to Showcasing BAM! Complete Guide to Spoken Word Performing BAM! Complete Guide to Taxation – Canada BAM! Complete Guide to Taxation – U.S.A. BAM! Complete Guide to Technical Riders BAM! Complete Guide to Theatre Performance – Canada BAM! Complete Guide to Theater Performance – U.S.A. BAM! Complete Guide to Touring BAM! Complete Guide to Touring Australia BAM! Complete Guide to Touring Canada BAM! Complete Guide to Touring China BAM! Complete Guide to Touring Eastern Europe BAM! Complete Guide to Touring France BAM! Complete Guide to Touring Germany BAM! Complete Guide to Touring Japan BAM! Complete Guide to Touring Latin America BAM! Complete Guide to Touring the United Kingdom BAM! Complete Guide to Touring the United States BAM! Complete Guide to Touring Western Europe **BAM!** Complete Guide to Unions BAM! Complete Guide to Venues – Canada BAM! Complete Guide to Venues – U.S.A. BAM! Complete Guide to Visas – Canada BAM! Complete Guide to Visas – U.S.A. **BAM!** Complete Guide to Waivers BAM! Complete Guide to Withholding – Canada BAM! Complete Guide to Withholding – U.S.A. BAM! Complete Guide to Young Audience Performance – Canada

BAM! Complete Guide to Young Audience Performance – U.S.A.

All Guides are or will be available for download from the BAM! Baird Artists Management Consulting website: www.bairdartists.com



Robert Baird, President of Baird Artists Management, is now available for consultation and advice regarding Canadian and U.S. regulations and information for performers, agents/managers and performing arts venues. Mr. Baird has been in the performing arts for over fifty years and has had distinguished careers in education, publishing and musical theatre. He served on the Board of Directors (2008-2010) and was President (2011-2013) of the North American Performing Arts Managers and Agents (NAPAMA). He was Treasurer and Vice-President of Festivals and Events Ontario (FEO) and served on that Board on various committees (2010-2013). Mr. Baird

received the Arts Northwest Coyote Award and the Performing Arts Exchange Mary Beth Treen Award in 2012. He is Chair of Team Agent Network (TAN) and APAP Showcase Coordinator.

Robert is a regular columnist in *International Musician: The Official Journal of the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada* (Circulation 100,000+ Monthly) where he writes a monthly column entitled "Crossing Borders". The column focuses on what artists need to know to get into Canada or the United States. He also writes a monthly column entitled "Artist Manager's Toolkit" for *International Arts Manager*, based in London, England.

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