

# A conversation in celebration of Madison's first 100 days

Ian: Welcome to a special presentation of the Regional Arts and Culture Council. RACC is an organization that serves the Portland Metro area with resources for arts and culture. To find out more details about our services, visit [racc.org](http://racc.org). Today's presentation is a conversation in celebration of the human connections that build pathways to arts and culture in our region. Our new executive director, Madison Cario, has been serving for more than 100 days and wanted to share some of the inspiring conversations about connection and access they witnessed during that time.

Madison: Thank you and hello. I am so excited to be here in this room today. I'm excited to be in Portland pushing 110 days. And I'm really excited about sharing an opportunity, with my guests today who I'll go around and name. But what's happened to me for the last 100 days is that I have had, magical conversations with individuals all across the region and they share these beautiful stories. So when my team asked me to do a podcast to recount my hundred days and talk about the magic, all I thought about was two things. One was: YES! Of course I would love to do that. And two, the first thing that came to my mind were the faces and the stories that were shared with me. And I think it'd be a shame to not bring some of those creative collisions, to the forefront. I shouldn't be the only one to hear those stories. So that's why you're all here today.

So I want you to do is tell our listeners who you are and what's your name and what you identify as in terms of a maker and a creator. And what is one magical thing about you that maybe, maybe no one else knows?

Jen: Okay, I'll start. I'm Jennifer Arnold. I'm a violist with Oregon symphony. I've been in the Oregon symphony for 14 years. and I work with a lot of RACC supported groups, 45th parallel, a lot of the youth orchestras in town.

Something fun about me, is that we were just talking about the royal baby. So I'm a royal enthusiast. Yeah. I'm one of those people who is always looking on the internet, like, Ooh, what's happening with the royals? And then go down at Wikipedia hole. Yeah.

Madison: That's fantastic. Thank you Jennifer.

Cheryl: My name is Cheryl Green. I am a documentary filmmaker and a freelance audio producer. I'm also a closed-captioner and audio describer. So, making my own content and other people's content accessible. A magic skill of mine is that I can make my mind's eye completely blank.

Madison: That's an amazing answer, can you teach me how to do that?

Cheryl: Well, it's actually from a brain injury, so it kind of is terrible, but like I can have complete like complete blankness. There's an aspect where you're unburdened because there's nothing there. Now in the case of an unexpected question, you kind of, hmm, I'm blank. But then it's also kind of peaceful in there.

Madison: That's great. Thank you. Cheryl.

Charlene: I'm Charlene Zidell. part of the Zidell family. We have some property down at South waterfront that we had hoped to develop and included in that development was going to be an art ecosystem. We are not able to proceed with that development at this time, but we do have the office building that we were in before. So it's 22,000 square feet, on the river with an amazing barge building next to it. And so we are working hard to figure out how to turn that into an arts hub. I am not an artist myself. Something people don't know about me. They would if they ever heard me try and sing is that I'm tone deaf.

Madison: That's great. Thank you Charlene. So I want to tell you a little bit about why and how I selected the three of you and there's many more. But I was thinking about the conversations that each of us had and they were there, each magical conversations. There's a certain agenda and my came up on my calendar and, I knew or thought I knew the conversation I was getting into, but every single one of you surprised me in such a wonderful way. and so I want to just reflect on that story a little bit.

So, so Jennifer, came with the symphony and we had an amazing conversation and what stuck with me that, that you made very visible was the invisible, the invisible part of being a musician that's part of our larger symphony. And that really resonated with me around this idea of making the invisible visible and also about access. I'm going to highlight each of the little magic, bubbles that you gave me and then I just want you to kind of reflect on that because that was really powerful and I have shared each of these magic moments out with staff and with others since that time. So thank you for bringing me that perspective.

And, Cheryl came to me through, an email full of gratitude for a, a small grant that she received from rack to, work on a film. And in that process of showing that film and being there, her work as an audio describer became the stellar focus of attention. And I was really amazed by the framework and I'm moving from access to aesthetics and joy and understanding that audio description is also a creative process. And again, that really resonated with me. So thank you for reminding me, to think about in the process of access. So I appreciate that Cheryl.

And Charlene! Well, I thought that I was going to meet with you and, the head of our public art program to talk about work that was, in, and or near the yards. And, and then I was blown away by this vision and this journey of yours to create a public art space where things happen where multiple artists are living and working, not just together, but also alongside each other. And it was really again a wonderful story of access to the river—which you shared a personal story. And so again, each of you came to me through this idea of, showing off, making the invisible visible and inviting people into your work. So that's why I wanted you all to meet. And I want you to, can you reflect on the reflection that I just gave you and how does that feel and does that happen? Are

these the conversations that are happening in your, in your sphere and in your communities? And I'm just, what do you think about that?

Cheryl: I had written to Helen... Daltoso?

Madison: Correct.

Cheryl: Because, I had gotten grants from RACC in the past to make films and this time I got a professional development grant to further my study in audio description. And let me define that because most people probably don't know what that is. An audio describer is a trained narrator who orients people to the visuals in a movie, a TV show, dance theater, whatever it is. And it's really geared toward access for blind audience members, people with visual impairments. Everybody can enjoy it, but it's really designed to be a disability access. And in my grant I said, hey RACC, you got to fund me. I'm probably the only trained filmmaker who is also trained in audio description and that makes me magic and awesome and I can really serve the Portland area by consulting and doing audio description for others.

I got the grant and then I kind of was—as we do in grant proposals, I was puffing myself up a little bit—but then it ended up being true. And I have been consulting on audio description. I have been describing other people's films, doing more of my own learning, the aesthetics of it, making it something that is much more than just compliance. And then I met you. I guess Helen passed my email to you Madison. And my reflection is that you passed my name along to Lisa Niedermeyer who works with Alice Shepherd, who is a dancer, who I have greatly admired for a while and is doing a disability focused work from a cultural perspective that I aspire to. And I have just a couple days ago submitted some audio description. They hired me and I audio described a dance piece that Alice and three other dancers who use wheelchairs do. That's magic. I never could have connected to Alice Shepherd on my own.

Madison: That's fantastic.

Cheryl: Thank you.

Madison: That's fantastic.

Jen: So for me, when we talked, my big thing is that in classical music there's always this conversation around elitism and barriers and things like that. And I've never known that, actually. I come from a place where—Cleveland, Ohio, where young people were playing music of all colors in all socioeconomic backgrounds. And so I grew up in an environment where music was for everyone. Classical music was for everyone. And then as I get older, it feels like people, there's a invisible barrier that people are starting to feel with the concert hall and other things that have nothing to do with the music. And I was, I really just wanted to come to that meeting with, with you and talk about, how we are musicians. They're 76 musicians in the Oregon symphony and we are a part of this community.

We do all the things that community members do and we play concerts. And we played great concerts of all different varieties and that even though we're in this one of the largest arts organizations in the state, and a proud to be, you know, full time, I mean, we're, we're able to do our job. We're full time, full salaried, you know, members with benefits, living, you know, a life of in the arts. It's just really important to remember that we're not just this, "Bougie" for lack of a better term, you know, group of people that there's all kinds of people in the Oregon symphony. There's 76 of us and we come from all different backgrounds and we are Portlanders.

Madison: That's fantastic. Thank you. So we've already started to talk a little bit about these myths, right? Because I think that's kind of my next question is, are there any other myths around the work that you do or have been doing or will be doing, that you'd like to tell all of Portland to kind of set the, set the record straight? So I think it's important to hear it from the voices of the creators or in your case, Charlene is the curator and the organizer of space. That's an important part of the arts ecology as well. What are those myths?

Jen: I mean, I can go on for the Oregon symphony. There's so many. I mean that the symphony is made up of older white males, where that's not true, I would say across the country, but especially the Oregon Symphony. Orchestras needed to do better. I spent a lot of time talking about diversity and thinking about diversity and Equity Inclusion and, all orchestras talk about this. But the Oregon symphony is really, has really embraced that for longer than people have been talking about it. Then I mean, just little things, just, yeah. That classical music isn't for everyone--when it's, it is, I mean, the music was written by all types of composers. You know, myths that, you know, conductors have to be male. I mean, people actually think these things, they write in and they say these things. And that our tickets are, our costs are high. I mean, we started like, I think \$10 tickets, \$20 tickets. And that can be high for people, but we also have \$5 arts for all. we, we do some free community concerts. There's all kinds of different levels.

Charlene: As somebody who has space available. I'm, I'm trying to think about, you know, what a myth might be. So I'm not aware of myths such as Jen was just talking about, but what it makes me think about is, if you can call it a myth, that the way we have done things traditionally is the only way to do it. Yes. So I have always been intrigued by the fact that for whatever reason, coworking space does not exist or I'm not aware of it for the arts. And I'm not sure if that's because different organizations are worried about protecting their donor list, whether it's space has never been available or whether they just never thought about it. But for a long time now, I've been thinking about there, there should be a way, a coworking method of some sort for arts organizations so that they're not all duplicating copy machines and telephones and that kind of thing. And the other part of that is that when you bring together cross disciplinary artists, what kind of magic might come out of that.

Cheryl: I think one of the big myths I've come across as that, we don't need to do make art accessible because for example, why would a deaf person care about a podcast? Blind people don't go to the movies. Those are just two of a billion examples I could give. And you know, they, they really come out of just unexamined bias and not, I mean, if you really paid attention to that statement, no, there's no podcast content out there a deaf

person would care about. Hmm. Just really sit with that. How could that be possible? So, again, those are just two little examples, but they, but they, reflect reflect this larger belief that people who have access needs around deafness or disability don't want to engage in the arts and media, the news, any of these things. And then the other one is that if these groups do that, they only want content related to their disability or being deaf.

So, I work with a lot of filmmakers as a captioner and audio describer, I am constantly trying to sell this idea to people, hey, if you had access, not only will you be following the law but you will grow your audience. More people can have your product if you make it accessible. And, and I find more enthusiasm comes from people who are doing disability related content than those who aren't. And it, it is hard to get that across that regardless of, I mean it's like what you said. No, the classical music is for anybody who wants it to play it or to listen to it. It really can be same as disability related content can be for non disabled people and disabled people can enjoy content on whatever other topic they're interested in.

Madison: That's great. Thank you. Okay, so thank you for sharing.

Um, these are all really interesting and now that we know a little bit about each other, I want to start connecting the three of you a little bit more deeply. And, so I have a question about, with the little bit of knowledge you have about each other in the room, what kind of sparked for you, what are ideas, or dreams that you might have about how you see your work connecting with the other folks in the room? So, anything that's popped into your mind as we've been talking?

Jen: So we had just talked about having, apparently there's a, there's a rapper out there who has, who I think he's deaf actually. And we were talking about putting on a concert by this rapper. Do you know what I'm talking about?

Cheryl: Yeah! I think I know of at least two deaf rappers, so, bring 'em!

Jen: Right. Okay. Right. So we were talking about and what this would mean and not just bringing one, just not just doing one time, right. Bringing, more content like that to the symphony. And, so it just made me think of that and the fact that also one of my former students, his mother just did a documentary called Moonlight Sonata. Irene Taylor Brodsky—about, it's called actually a moonlight sonata deafness in three movements. And talking about bringing that to the symphony and just having more, you know, just more things for everyone. I mean, you can never just limit yourself. The arts are for everyone. So just made me think of that connection.

Cheryl: That's great. Yeah. So we'll talk afterwards. Yeah. Can't wait. Interpreters, interpreters and that stuff. Yeah. Very Cool.

Charlene: So I've not been familiar with the kind of work that Cheryl does and find it amazing and very intriguing. And so I immediately want to start figuring out how to share that with the rest of the world. And I think that often what happens is each art organization or

artist for that matter has this group of people that they connect with. But then there's everyone else who they don't connect with.

And I look at myself, I've lived in Oregon my whole life. I just learned about Passin Art. They've been around for 34 years I think. And I was so amazed with the work that they did. So I've been telling everyone I know about that organization. It makes me sad to think of how much I don't know. So I like to flip the access question on its head in a way and go, all right, so for people like me, I don't have the knowledge and, and how can we do a better job of getting that information out to the community?

Madison: That's my next question. How can we collectively do better, as individuals and as organizations and as communities, right? We all have our networks. How can we start crossing those networks? I mean, this is a perfect example of, of starting that. What other ideas, what do you see happening elsewhere in other parts of the country or? I How do we collect those ideas and then maybe offer them up for others to, to take on and to lead.

Charlene: So we're thinking about a hub and spoke concept so that if you have like the center of gravity, you have the hub somewhere and that that hub intentionally connects out into different communities so people aren't operating in their silos, but there's actually some organization to it.

Madison: That's great. That's how I envision RACC too. Like we do a lot of that and we're going to keep doing that work but really start leveraging the, the center of RACC, which is the people not the building, as a resource to keep connecting the different communities that we work with. And that'll be our, or a lot of our work over the next year is to raise up those networks and to connect, across platforms and in platforms. This time I'm talking about, you know, we have the grant making, we have public art and we have arts education and kind of where did they meet, right. And they meet in our bodies, right? They meet where we touch people. So we want to really focus on that. So that kind of fits with that hub and spoke idea that you're talking about. Any other ideas for how we can "de-silo", if that's a word.

Jen: The way I actually am just trying to work on it personally is that I'm trying to broaden my personal network, doing meeting people, you know, that I'm in places that I'm like, wait, normally I don't go, you know, not just trying new things, but actually talking to people and asking them what they do and telling them what I do. And then you get into really interesting conversations and that it becomes at 6 degrees of separation in Portland because even though Portland's a city, it's kind of a small town.

So for me it's like, and I, and I think about that not just personally but also in terms of the Oregon Symphony. I always tell my colleagues and, and you know, people especially on the staff that, you know, when you're looking for more diverse candidates or something and a lot of people already get hired, what with connection with some sort of connections or networking or whatever. Like look at your network. Do you have people that are diverse in your network? And if you can't, if you don't, start there, just start from that and broaden your network. Not even just from a job perspective, but a life perspective.

Madison: That's some great advice.

Charlene: How about this really crazy idea? What if we create a "match.com" for community members and arts organizations and we take a day or we take a week and everybody gets matched up and we figure out how to do it without people having to buy expensive tickets.

Jen: Right.

Charlene: And we see what happens.

Madison: I love it.

Jen: I do too.

Madison: Match making for the arts. Love it. So is it like a speed date...? Do we go Dutch?

Charlene: Lot of lot of options.

Madison: I love that. This one should be pretty easy. I want to know why you said Yes to this invitation to be on the podcast.

Charlene: I said yes because I love meeting people and I love learning and for some reason I just assumed there'd be like 300 people here.

Cheryl: And you wanted that.

Charlene: I wanted the 300 cause I was going to sit in the back and listen and try and learn. And then when I found out that there were four of us, including Madison and I was supposed to come and say who I was... So it was out of ignorance, I guess is the answer to the question.

Madison: Still. Yes. I'll take it anyway I can get it. What about you? Jen...

Jen: For me is, it's that public speaking makes me uncomfortable and I'm trying to conquer that issue, by talking it out like this.

Madison: That's fantastic.

Jen: Plus. Our conversation was wonderful, so I was like, You're cool. I'm cool. Like, let's keep doing it. So.

Cheryl: It was, it was just obvious for me that I would want to come, because I wanted to thank you. Anyway, Madison. But now I get to thank you in front of other people that you initiated, meeting me and I was just coming in to say "thanks for the RACC grant. This is really fun" but like I said before, you, you just threw this creative paid opportunity right into my lap. You follow it through, you made the connection, you know, some people

will say, oh I'm going to hook you up with this person and they don't because they're busy or forget. And despite that pile of something like 8,000 business cards you had on your table you said "these are from today," I'm exaggerating only a little, you still made the time and you made the connection that you said you would. And that is boosting my career and is giving me more opportunities because describing dance is very hard audio description of dance as much harder than the documentary films I do.

And it was such a challenge to write and record that script and I loved it. It really stretched me. Spent a lot of time on thesaurus.com

Madison: That's fantastic.

Cheryl: But yeah, I'm so grateful for the opportunity. The invitation to thank you publicly.

Madison: Thank you. I'm honored

Madison: What are strategies or ideas or frameworks that we can throw out to those who will listen to this conversation? You know, like how do I do that? **How do you get to the yeses in your life with your work with other people**, right. That outside "Yes"?

Jen: I think being genuine. I definitely think it's important to follow through. But I also think it's really nice to, for me if I, if I just come from a place of trying to be a good person and helping someone, whether it's moving forward in their life or making a connection or whatever. I mean that's just my personal goal and that translates also to, you know, my viola playing, how, how can I use my viola playing to help people feel better or to ease, you know, ease peoples souls, those kinds of things.

Charlene: I think for me, I would say being transparent and listening, I know that I have so much to learn and certainly don't have the answers, at least in terms of what we're trying to do down in Zidell Yards. So I have to listen and try and figure out where the gaps are in the community to see if we can use physical space to help fill those gaps.

Cheryl: I think for me, I don't remember what I've said yes to. So I say yes to the next thing and then realize, oh, I already said yes to something because I can, I, I just really struggled to keep my day planner. It's very confusing for me. So that's my flippant answer. But it is true The less flippant answer is that I look at all of my opportunities as a gift. Okay. So you've made a film, this is a great film and you want to make it accessible and you were willing to pay? Oh my gosh, this is so cool that I'm going to get to participate to allowing people who have been marginalized and have been excluded from accessing art and media. I get to play a role in them coming in? Yes! And, and the same thing when I go into somebody's home with my camera or my microphone, you're going to let me film you? You're going to tell me about yourself? What a gift! How did I get this honor? So that's the, the less silly reason to how I get to, yes.

Madison: That's great. What's something that, you would like to see the creative community here in Portland do together?



Madison: Collectively in this room, I think we touch thousands of people in a given day. How's that feel?

Cheryl: That's really humbling. I hadn't even, I hadn't thought about that even though I know, I mean my films, I don't know, I'm not an award winning filmmaker, but my captions had been on PBS like six times and I'm always, you know, calling and texting friends. "My captions are on PBS, which I don't remember which movie, but I saw, you know, the film maker posted one of my captions." I mean, when I see these filmmakers posts, you know, I'm on America reframed, I'm on this. I'm like that. I like, I, my cheeks blush, I feel flush. "My captions!" I'm also, I am happy for these filmmakers. Of course it's great content, but I just am beside myself when I think that people anywhere in the country might be able to flip those on and they've got quality captions and they can watch this film. Yeah, I mean, my cheeks get flushed every time that happens.

Charlene: From my perspective, it's about building community and it's about humanity. And arts are the vehicle that are being used to make that happen. I think that the technology world that we all live in today, it's easy for people to feel very disconnected. And so as we think about the space we want to create. . . We don't want to create coworking space where people come in with their earphones on and their blinders and go in their office and don't connect with other people. It's about that connection.

So one thing that we have done to try and make that successful in our building is that in our policies, there is a policy that says every tenant in our building must do one free event for the community. And everybody that's coming into that space knows this is about community. This is not about the place to put your computer and your desk. Yes, that's part of it. But there's a much bigger thing going on here. And again, it's this cross disciplinary aspect that our artists as well as other kinds of professions, but that also brings in the public, you know, so it connects everybody in one way or another.

Jen: The reason I do it, and... the Oregon symphony is, is for everyone. And, and I really mean that because for me, growing up the arts, we're just part of life. Everyone I knew had a piano in their house. What are they played it very well or not. and didn't matter what income level, they just, you know, if they had a home, I should say they had a piano. there was a choir in like every school or band or some sort of art or dance program or something. So it never became, when you, I think when you grow up with, into it, you know, how like people say music is a language? That's how music was for me. And the art in general. It was a language. it's a vital part of life. That's what I'm trying to say. The arts are a vital part of life, I'm one of those people who definitely the Arts is a right. And, and that's why I do it. I think more so the, the personal aspect of my playing, viola playing, I love to play for me, but I love to play for people. Wwhether it's in a concert form or in other forms, I just know that I've seen it on many, many occasions how... the reaction of people to music. And it's not always a positive reaction. It can be, but it's whatever emotion is coming out. and I think it's important.

Charlene: I have a question for Jan and I'm curious what made that happen in your growing up and how do we replicate that or get back to that?

Jen: Well, I think it's maybe, I mean I was born in 1980 so I think maybe Ohio, Ohio's a band country, so already you have larger bands. Music education was in most of the schools. So you do have that, but it's kind of like, going back to Cleveland, it's kind of like sports.

Cleveland Sports, they're fanatics. Okay. I'm a Cleveland sports fanatic. People grow up coming out of the womb, you know, loving the Cleveland Browns, loving the Indians, whatever, the Cavs. And it's just the same thing about music I think. I think it's just like when you are four or five, you, you're in that baby, you know, "mom and me" or "dad and me" program. and then it goes on from there, you know, and there are a lot of places that have funds, so if you don't have the funds to take lessons or whatever, there are a lot of like nonprofits or organizations or even schools, you know, that will help you get that. The access. Here, I think there are a lot of places, but I think people just don't know of those institutions. You know, the Oregon symphony, through a lot of their partnerships provides, private lessons free, you know, if they write grants and things like that. I run a teaching program for Alis Dot Middle School. we might start one next year at Bravo youth orchestras for their students. so there's the resources out there so that students can have free lessons and things like that and instruments, and the teachers come to them. So it's all that stuff's taken care of. So it's just, I think getting the word out in Portland in a different way. I think that's the biggest issue. Like you were saying, the hub hub, you know, letting people know the resources.

Madison: I just want to reflect a little bit of what I've heard in the last couple of answers because it's really beautiful. So in reframing and thinking about the arts, what I've heard is, this is, this is a right, this access, right? It is about humanity. I've also heard humility in the cheeks blushing. And I've heard us talk about, arts has a language and a connector. And again, coming back to this issue of access and invitation. And also I want to end this reflection on, the desire that I hear and I've heard this in every meeting to, to bring art back to the center as a part of just everyday life. The everyday epics of life involves art and community and humanity, right? And so I think I'm hearing those themes come up over and over again. So, thank you for sharing and being so generous with your time.

Here's a fun one for me. What's one question you wished I asked you that I didn't or that you always wish somebody would ask you and they just don't ever ask that one question that you actually have that burning answer for?

Jen: I was hoping maybe we talk a little bit about, a little bit about and venues in Portland as an, as an artist. For me that's, that's one of the biggest struggles, venues and costs. And so that's just a topic that maybe, maybe some other podcasts can talk about, you know.

Madison: Well, we have time right now. What do we want to talk about this? Talk about venues. We are talking about? Access to? Affordability?

Jen: Access. Affordability. Yeah. I mean for, for some of the smaller nonprofits that I work with, like 45th parallel or a Fear No Music, some of the chamber groups, Classical Up Close. And I'm sure other arts organizations suffer from this, but like it is very hard to find a small performance venue that's affordable with good seating, with good, I'm not even talking about acoustics, that's not important, but you know,

Madison: says the musician..

Jen: I know. Right. And for me that's not even that important. I'll play anywhere. But it's, you know, other things like the right area, cause you have all kinds of issues. Is it on a bus line is it on, you know, near bike, bike friendly area? You know, can people get there? So, outskirts of town, you know, can we get to Gresham? Where's a good performance space there? Things like that. so anyways, I constantly am. Am thinking about that performance venues,

Charlene: Can you describe a small venue, the size of it?

Jen: Well, I would say anywhere between like 300 and 500 seats. I'm not even thinking a thousand. Something like that. In my case it's chamber ensembles I'm always thinking of, but it could be for other projects as well. Bands, you know, you name it, but they're so--they're so costly here. Events spaces are costly here. So it's just like if you're a small, you know, you want to put on a concert here, it's kind of expensive compared to at least where I came from.

Madison: That's a great point. you, So I want to call out too, cause again this is about access and power and knowledge and information. So, if you don't know, there is a report that was put out by Commissioner Fish's office, which kind of highlights both the problem and some ideas. There's 24 solutions and things that the city would like to move on. RACC is a part of that conversation, but we're one piece of a much, much larger conversation. I would encourage everyone to look at that. And then some other exciting news: I'm not sure if this group is familiar with Portland SpaceFinder?

So Portland's SpaceFinders, is a, is a digital platform and it is, was created by Fractured Atlas in New York. And essentially what it is, is a place for folks who have space and folks who are looking for space to connect. It's kind of like match.com from, oh my goodness, I need a rehearsal space tonight and it needs to fit this many people and so on and so forth. It has been a labor of love by two local artists who have kept it up and I think there's about almost 200 spaces in there now. RACC is going to help and partner and bring that in house so we can keep adding to that. It gets to issues of "where is stuff?" Where stuff in east Portland in this place, like wherever I want to go with my work? It also is beginning the conversation around accessibility. So we're looking at models that will allow artists who have used the space to provide feedback or say like, yes, I do agree this is accessible.

So this is one teeny, teeny, teeny, teeny, teeny daddy can't see him making teeny, teeny, tiny shapes with my fingers. but when one small way to start to have a conversation, but it leaves a much larger conversation that involves many voices in a... I want to think about this group as the beginning of, of a mighty army and how do we convene, and I'm looking at your Charlene because Charlene has space and RACC has space. And if we start thinking about convening people... Okay, we can wait for city development to get to the point where, we're really integral, which will happen. I believe that I mean Portland is a great town. However, in the interim we have lots of stuff we want to share. So I think there's no lack of creative minds that I would love to see starting to come together, to, to brainstorm and to try some things. What if every

gathering and every conversation comes away with some actionable small step towards providing space.

You each have some experience with the organization—RACC—and I am curious what your thoughts are in terms of something that you would like to see us do more of, do less of or do differently. I just love hearing the ideas from community that has been here a lot longer than 111 days.

Jen: Okay. I'll go first. So actually I think I did not mention, but one of the reasons I actually attended the meeting as an interested party, with the Oregon symphony was because I actually realized I don't know much about RACC. And that's ridiculous. As someone who's been involved with so many RACC funded groups. So I was just really interested in getting to know about more about RACC. And I'm learning more and more. For me it's just, getting to know all the programs and the things that the organization does.

Madison: I think that's great. I think RACC also suffers from the, the “see the symphony, but not the musicians”. And RACC is RACC, right? Big RACC. And yet there's beautiful, talented, passionate people who do amazing work every day. And so I think, again your story reminded me to bring that back to, the community of RACC and to make sure that we have faces and stories as well.

Cheryl: I mean, yeah, get people who have gotten RACC grants but don't know RACC very well in the room with the, the people who administer the grants or who read the grant applications. I mean I have both had my own films funded by RACC but also screened my work with other organizations. They were the ones who got the grant. And I'm telling you, I look out there and there's Helen in the audience and it is, I mean, I don't know how to describe the feeling when you do this kind of impersonal bureaucratic thing of write a grant proposal and then you put your art together and there's someone from RACC sitting in the audience. You came, you came! You're so busy, you probably have 50 RACC funded events happening this weekend and you came to this one. And they don't always come to all my screenings, but when RACC staff come to my screenings, you, you feel like a person, you feel like a person connecting and not just, “I typed up these words and you liked the words that I typed and you gave me money.” You mentioned transactional before. Having RACC staff come to your events and meet you and shake your hands and congratulate you, and then getting to be on a podcast with RACC. Like the transactional nature is not there. It's the relational thing.

Jen: I'll add something. Actually, it made, I think I was thinking about this the other day. So I went online and was looking at the RACC board just because I tried to see if there was anyone I knew from our audience. and I didn't know anyone, but I was interested in knowing because it was very much corporate, like I worked for this corporation, but I was interested in knowing maybe what arts institutions they're interested in, what arts, you know, just from a little, you know, a little what could RACC do better, but just as a little thing, you know,

Madison: That's a fantastic suggestion, right? Re-humanize us not just where we work and our titles, but who we are and what we love and how we connect. And that's what the point of this podcast was.

So I want to thank each of you for your time, for sharing your stories and your energy, not just with me, but with the larger community of wherever this presentation goes. So, thank you again for your time. Thank you.

Ian:

Thank you for listening today. We hope you enjoyed the conversation with our wonderful guests. We want to hear from you! So please visit [racc.org/talkback](https://racc.org/talkback) to share feedback and comments. If you like what you heard and are interested in supporting arts and culture in your community, we'd love for you to join us! For more information on our work services, events, and opportunities, Find us on Facebook and Instagram or visit [racc.org](https://racc.org)