

## **Jamie's Statement of Purpose**

### **Making Art, Making a Living, Making a Difference**

**"If you fail to be a true man or a true woman, you will fail to be an artist."**

- *Gabriela Mistral*

Networking and seeking work are difficult, sometimes soul-robbing experiences for artists, especially non-commercial and freelance ones. Ever changing personnel in government agencies, arts administrations and cultural venues make effective communication a challenge. Funding for the arts is always in flux. Cash poor arts venues often suffer from mismanagement. These pervasive dilemmas can make one wonder if things could be different in a culture that is more supportive of their artists. But, **we work with what we've got!** Truthfully, as one who lives it, the life of an artist IS a rough career choice as a rule. Furthermore, varying philosophies about the value of art and music in our lives (and their value in the lives of our children, as well) often make creative souls feel like an anomaly in a world of 9-5 jobs and pension plans. But we are not looking to be an oddity or a quaint exception. We are looking to WORK.

The road to creative success often features signposts in front of us that are colored by sour past experiences. The truth is, we aren't in this biz to be noble or courageous, we're in it, yes, to work AND - **a) to have fun and, b) to find security by doing what we love.** In the United States our culture is ripe with talented, unique individuals and groups that are ready to make art anywhere, anytime, **given a context that fulfills the most basic needs and desires.** For many of us these needs are as simple as receiving a fair wage, being given respect without prejudice or sexism, finding a safe and popular place to be seen and heard. We'd also like to get it 'in writing', have a fair contract, receive press coverage, have good communication between the venue/organization and ourselves, and to gain the respect of our peers. It's not a long list!

I believe a growing number of dreams can be realized through the "underground network" -word of mouth, the Internet, the house party, the personal recommendation and the barter. The arts may be a BIG business, but if we are to make it our business, we need the support of community and to seek advice from people we can trust.

In 1998, I created the course and workshop **Self Producing in the Arts: Making a Life in the Arts** and began teaching at academic institutions and arts agencies, and acting as a coach in private one-on-one sessions. **Making a Life in the Arts** is a one-of-a kind course, with a focus that is part lifestyle-philosophy and part business smarts, and it continues to evolve. I add new information and change the course content as I discover more myself. I have taught dozens of artists and provided counsel to many non-profit groups, from wishful thinkers to professional doers. I have written several guides designed to make looking for work, creating, producing events, and living this creative life easier for my friends and colleagues. I am writing a book to be published in the next few years.

I will be including more sections and updating the pages regularly. I welcome your input.

*-Jamie, O'Reilly, June 2003*