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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Londoners treat artists with smugness, ignorance

In response to Ian Gillespie's column, Dance speaks for itself (March 19).

Picking up the Sunday Free Press in our illustrious, sophisticated Forest City can be a consistent reminder of the lack of grace and ample supply of smugness in our city natives' attitudes toward artists, dancers and musicians.

There is something fundamentally wrong with our self-perception when we think to invite brilliant artists such as Zhang Wei-Quiang of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and promptly poke fun at him for our lack of understanding. With a couple of phone calls, I am sure we could have come up with a multitude of Chinese translators in this town.

I could describe many such uncomfortable interviews with journalists covering my operatic career who knew not a thing about the art form. I, too, would like to think that I remained patiently gracious in my responses and certainly would not have made a public joke of that journalist's lack of knowledge.

This lack of respect toward artists comes screaming at us far too often. It is the same utter disappointment I feel when hearing the smug comments made by our city councillors vis-a-vis our Orchestra London crisis.

It is a time to rally our forces to show an enlightened London or will we finally see a mass exodus of musicians from this fair city. Surely, we can do better than this.

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