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News Release

2014 GOVERNOR GENERAL'S PERFORMING ARTS AWARDS MENTORSHIP PROGRAM: OPERA SINGER JOSEPH ROULEAU TO MENTOR TENOR JEAN-PHILIPPE FORTIER-LAZURE

March 26, 2014 – OTTAWA (Canada) – The National Arts Centre is proud to announce that acclaimed Canadian opera singer **Joseph Rouleau** has chosen to mentor up-and-coming tenor **Jean-Philippe Fortier-Lazure** through the 2014 Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Mentorship Program, which is made possible with support from The Keg Spirit Foundation.

The Mentorship Program allows past recipients of the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards, which are Canada's highest honours in the performing arts, to give back to the next generation. Joseph Rouleau received the Governor General's Performing Arts Award for Lifetime Artistic Achievement in 2004 for his many contributions to the cultural life of our country.

This mentorship opportunity comes in the wake of a very successful artistic year for Jean-Philippe Fortier-Lazure. The tenor recently joined the Canadian Opera Company's Ensemble Studio and now gets to work with Mr. Rouleau, whom he met three years ago when they performed together in the opera *Pelléas et Mélisande* in Montreal.

"I would never have thought that I would have the privilege of being mentored by such a remarkable artist and musician," said Mr. Fortier-Lazure. *"This is beyond my wildest dreams. Having Mr. Rouleau help me prepare for my upcoming year and mentor me on the career paths that lie ahead will help me achieve my goals and make my dreams reality. I owe a great deal of thanks to the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Foundation, the National Arts Centre, the Banff Centre and The Keg Spirit Foundation for making this possible. I am incredibly moved by their generosity."*

For his part, Joseph Rouleau explained how delighted he was at the prospect of working with Mr. Fortier-Lazure as part of the Mentorship Program: *"I have dedicated a great deal of my life in music to supporting and helping young Canadian artists, but the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Mentorship Program truly fulfils my lifelong desire and passion to help a talented young artist reach the peak of their potential."*

(Full biographies of Joseph Rouleau and Jean-Philippe Fortier-Lazure can be found at the bottom of this release.)

A unique partnership between the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Foundation, the National Arts Centre and The Keg Spirit Foundation, the GGPAA Mentorship Program is designed to offer creative guidance to talented mid-career artists, and serves as an investment in future Canadian artistic achievement. Each year, a past laureate of the Lifetime Artistic Achievement Award is invited to select a professional artist (or artists) to share, learn and grow from the experience and insight of their mentor. In addition to receiving artistic guidance and an honorarium, each protégé is showcased throughout the GGPAA celebrations in Ottawa from May 8 to 10, culminating with the star-studded GGPAA Gala on May 10 at the NAC.

Joining the partnership for the second consecutive year is The Banff Centre, Canada's leading institution for advanced training in the performing, visual and literary arts, film, television, and digital media. Messrs. Rouleau and Fortier-Lazure will spend time working together at the Banff Centre, known internationally for its creative atmosphere and outstanding resources.

The Governor General's Performing Arts Awards and the National Arts Centre Foundation are deeply grateful to The Keg Spirit Foundation, which has generously supported the Mentorship Program for six consecutive years. Established in 2001, The Keg Spirit Foundation supports organizations that mirror the mentorship that The Keg Steakhouse + Bar has provided to tens of thousands of young staff for over 40 years. In that time, over \$7.3 million has been raised for more than 300 charities across North America.

"In keeping with our Foundation's mandate to support quality mentorship programs, we are truly honoured to support the mentorship of a rising Canadian artist like Jean-Philippe Fortier-Lazure," said David Aisenstat, President and CEO of The Keg Steakhouse + Bar, and Chairman of The Keg Spirit Foundation. *"I know first-hand the impact that a mentor can have in one's career, and am confident that Joseph Rouleau's guidance through the coming year will be of tremendous value to Jean-Philippe, and will enable him to reach new heights in an already exciting and promising career."*

ABOUT THE GOVERNOR GENERAL'S PERFORMING ARTS AWARDS

Created in 1992, the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards are Canada's highest honour for the performing arts. This year's laureates for Lifetime Artistic Achievement are **Anik Bissonnette, Blue Rodeo, Brent Carver, Tom Jackson, Louise Lecavalier** and **Janine Sullo**. Two other distinguished national awards are also conferred each year as complements to the GGPAAs for lifetime artistic achievement. This year **Jean Giguère** will receive the Ramon John Hnatyshyn Award for Voluntarism in the Performing Arts, while **Albert Schultz** is the recipient of the National Arts Centre Award, which recognizes exceptional achievement over the past performance year.

The 2014 laureates will be honoured at various events in Ottawa from May 8 to 10. On May 8, they will attend a lunch hosted by the Honourable Andrew Scheer, Speaker of the House of Commons, and be introduced in the House of Commons, followed by a parliamentary reception. On May 9, His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, will present the Awards at a special ceremony and reception at Rideau Hall. On May 10, the National Arts Centre will host a sparkling Gala to celebrate the 2014 laureates, a star-studded celebration featuring superb performances, evocative film portraits by the **National Film Board**, and personal tributes by guest stars.

PARTNERS

The National Arts Centre is proud to produce the 2014 Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Gala in partnership with the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Foundation. The Awards are presented with the support of the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Canada Council for the Arts.

The GGPAAs gratefully acknowledges **Enbridge** as Presenting Sponsor of the GGPAAs Gala.

Grateful thanks also go to the GGPAAs Gala's National Committee of volunteers, led by Honorary Chair the Hon. Hilary M. Weston, CM, OOnt, Co-Chairs Kate Alexander Daniels and Salah Bachir, and past chairs Susan Glass, CM, and Arni Thorsteinson.

TICKETS

Tickets for the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Gala on Saturday, May 10, 2014 go on sale to the general public on Wednesday, March 26, 2014, at 11 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time at the NAC Box Office and through Ticketmaster, 1-888-991-2787 or www.ticketmaster.ca.

BIOGRAPHIES

Joseph Rouleau – Mentor

Internationally renowned bass Joseph Rouleau (2004 GGPA for Lifetime Artistic Achievement) has sung with prestigious orchestras and opera companies across Canada and around the world, and shared the stage with such distinguished performers as Victoria de Los Angeles, Luciano Pavarotti, Joan Sutherland, Cesare Siepi, Plácido Domingo, Kiri Te Kanawa, and Maria Callas. At the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London, he sang in more than 49 operas and more than 1,000 performances, in an international career spanning over six decades. He has recorded an impressive discography. Memorable roles include Boris Godunov (*Boris Godunov*), Philip II and Inquisitore (*Don Carlos*), Basilio (*Barber of Seville*), Mephistopheles (*Faust*), Don Quixote (*Don Quixote*), Ramfis (*Aïda*), and Prince Gremin (*Onegin*). Mr. Rouleau was a key contributor to the creation of the Orchestre Métropolitain du Grand Montréal, the Opéra de Montréal, and the Centre Pierre-Péladeau, and co-founded the Montreal International Music Festival. A highly respected teacher and mentor, he taught voice at the Université du Québec à Montréal from 1980 to 1998, and as president of Jeunesses Musicales du Canada since 1989 he has shared his passion for music with thousands of young people and furthered the careers of Canada's finest young artists. Joseph Rouleau was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1977 and promoted to Companion in 2010; he was named an Officer of the Ordre national du Québec in 1999 and promoted to Grand Officer in 2004. His many other distinctions include the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden Silver Medal; Metropolitan Opera Centennial Medal; Prix Denise-Pelletier (Prix du Québec); Opera Canada "Ruby" Award; three Félix Awards; and honorary doctorates from McGill University and the Université du Québec à Rimouski.

Jean-Philippe Fortier-Lazure – Protégé

Tenor Jean-Philippe Fortier-Lazure was born and raised in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario. He studied linguistics at the University of Ottawa, where he also took voice lessons with Laurence Ewashko, chorus master of Opera Lyra Ottawa. "He invited me to join the chorus," recalls Mr. Fortier-Lazure, "and that's when I really fell in love with opera. From that point on, I immersed myself in the art form and I've been having fun ever since. I can't see myself doing anything else." He already has a connection with mentor Joseph Rouleau: in March 2012 Mr. Fortier-Lazure sang Pelléas in the Atelier d'opéra (Université de Montréal) production of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, with Mr. Rouleau in the role of his grandfather, King Arkel. Mr. Fortier-Lazure is currently completing a master's degree in classical singing at the University of Montreal. He has participated in young artist training programs at the National Arts Centre, the Centre d'arts Orford, and the Académie Internationale d'été in Nice, France. His performance credits include Pelléas in *Pelléas et Mélisande* (Nova Scotia Opera Company and Atelier d'Opéra, University of Montreal); Chevalier de la Force in *Dialogues des Carmélites* (Atelier d'Opéra); Beppe in *Pagliacci* (Opera Lyra Ottawa—Silver Cast); Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* and Don Curzio/Don Basilio in *Le nozze di Figaro* (University of Ottawa Opera Productions); and *Carmina Burana* with the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal. In 2013 Mr. Fortier-Lazure won second prize in the Joy in Singing voice competition in New York and in the Canadian Opera Company's Ensemble Studio voice competition.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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