



**GOVERNOR GENERAL'S
PERFORMING ARTS AWARDS FOUNDATION
FONDATION DES PRIX DU GOUVERNEUR GÉNÉRAL
POUR LES ARTS DU SPECTACLE**

NEWS RELEASE

**CELEBRATING CANADIAN TALENT:
2017 GOVERNOR GENERAL'S PERFORMING ARTS AWARD LAUREATES
ANNOUNCED**

OTTAWA, June 2017 – The Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Foundation is pleased to announce our 25th-anniversary recipients of Canada's most prestigious performing arts awards.

The laureates of the 2017 **Governor General's Performing Arts Awards (GGPAA) for Lifetime Artistic Achievement** are:

- **Jean Beaudin** – Film and television director and screenwriter
Hailed as a consummate director of Quebec literature, Jean Beaudin has delighted film and television audiences throughout his career as a director and screenwriter. From his early days at the National Film Board to his monumentally successful historical film dramas and TV series, his work stands out for its authenticity, simplicity and visual beauty, and has been instrumental in transmitting our cultural heritage and shaping a distinctive voice in Quebec and Canadian cinema. "The key is to make films with a lot of love, about things you feel strongly about," he says.
- **Michael J. Fox, O.C.** – Actor, writer, producer and humanitarian
Michael J. Fox is a respected and accomplished screen actor, best known for his award-winning work in the television series *Family Ties* and *Spin City* and the *Back to the Future* film trilogy. Diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 1991, he founded the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research in 2000. He has received numerous humanitarian awards and has become an outspoken and inspiring advocate for people living with Parkinson's.
- **Brigitte Haentjens** – Theatre director and artistic director
Passionate about language and literature, keenly interested in issues of identity, sexuality and power, Brigitte Haentjens is known for her dazzlingly original, avant-garde productions and her thoughtful and poetic approach to contemporary theatre practice. In a career spanning nearly 40 years, she has directed some 60 productions and garnered a host of awards and honours. Her remarkable achievements as a stage director stand alongside her outstanding work as a leader of major arts institutions. She is an iconic figure in the theatre community, and her contribution to Canada's cultural profile is immense.
- **Martin Short, C.M.** – Actor, writer and producer
Acclaimed stage and screen actor Martin Short is known for his wacky comedic characters and dead-on impressions, notably on *SCTV* and *Saturday Night Live*. In a career spanning over 40 years, he has delighted audiences across North America and beyond, and made laughter an important Canadian export.
- **Yves Sioui Durand** – Writer, theatre and film director, actor and producer
Writer, director, filmmaker and actor Yves Sioui Durand is a pioneering figure in contemporary Indigenous theatre and the founder of Ondinnok, Quebec's first French-language Indigenous



theatre company. In a career spanning over 32 years, he has become known for his transcultural exploration of the contemporary Indigenous experience through richly allegorical mythology. Healing the collective abscess, eradicating the alienation that stifles imagination, proposing a new ethic: for him, this is the role of Indigenous theatre. His artistic creativity updates an age-old cultural legacy for a contemporary audience while respecting ancestral codes, and as an artist, he believes passionately in the reconstruction of Indigenous cultures through art.

The Ramon John Hnatyshyn Award for Voluntarism in the Performing Arts

- **William H. Loewen, C.M.**

Entrepreneur and philanthropist William H. (Bill) Loewen has provided leadership, direction and financial support to the performing arts for over three decades. A passionate music lover, he has a close association with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, to which he and his wife Shirley have donated over a million dollars through the W.H. & S.E. Loewen Foundation. Other organizations he has supported include the Manitoba Opera, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, the Manitoba Choral Association, the Winnipeg Chamber Music Association, and the St. Norbert Arts Centre.

The National Arts Centre Award

- **Michael Bublé – Singer and entertainer**

A charismatic singer, talented songwriter and brilliant entertainer, Michael Bublé has become one of the pre-eminent music artists of his generation. Inspired by such classic singers as Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Tony Bennett, as well as modern artists (notably Bryan Adams and Harry Connick, Jr.), he includes jazz standards, adult contemporary pop songs and original material in his repertoire. His rich baritone voice, engaging humour and magnetic stage presence have made him one of the most sought-after performers in the world, and many of his recordings have achieved number one status in Canada and internationally.

“We are thrilled to honour these extraordinary Canadian artists whose genius and talent have made an indelible contribution to our lives,” said Douglas Knight, Chair of the Governor General’s Performing Arts Awards Foundation (GGPAAF). Added Paul-André Fortier, Co-chair of the Foundation, “These prestigious awards continue to demonstrate the extraordinary pool of artistic talent in this country, as well as the extent to which the performing arts are truly part of who we are as Canadians.”

“The performing arts hold a special place in our society, entertaining us, inspiring us and engaging our minds and emotions,” said Governor General David Johnston. “I am proud to present these prestigious awards to such deserving performers and champions of the arts. Canada and the world are more thoughtful, vibrant and rich places thanks to their vision and determination.”

“The 2017 laureates are among the world’s finest and best-loved performing artists. As Canadians, we are extremely proud of them and share in their success as they reflect Canada’s boundless creative spirit and its enduring impact on audiences around the world,” said Simon Brault, O.C., Q.C., Director and CEO of the Canada Council for the Arts.

In addition to honouring the 2017 laureates, the Awards feature a unique **Mentorship Program**, a partnership inaugurated in 2008 between the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Foundation, Canada's National Arts Centre (NAC) and The Keg Spirit Foundation. Designed to unite past Lifetime Artistic Achievement Award recipients and talented mid-career artists, the program serves as a creative catalyst and as an investment in future Canadian artistic achievement. This program is a unique opportunity for the potential laureates of tomorrow to benefit from the creativity and experience of icons who have blazed the trail before them. This year's **mentor** is **Karen Kain, C.C.**, Artistic Director of The National Ballet of Canada, artist and arts advocate and recipient of the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Lifetime Artistic Achievement Award in 2002 and the National Arts Centre Award in 1997. **Robert Binet**, Choreographic Associate of The National Ballet of Canada, is this year's protégé.

The 2017 laureates will be honoured at two events in Ottawa in June, culminating in the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Gala presented by Birks at the National Arts Centre on Thursday, June 29 at 6:30 p.m. "As a company that has been part of Canadians' lives since 1879, Birks is delighted to sponsor the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Gala," said Jean-Christophe Bédos, President and Chief Executive Officer of Birks Group. "We take pride in being part of our customers' special moments and celebrations, and this 25th-anniversary Gala honouring some of our country's most talented artists is a great occasion to be celebrating across the nation."

The gala, produced by the National Arts Centre, will feature superb performances, evocative short films about the Award laureates (created by the National Film Board of Canada), and personal tributes by guest stars. "Since 2008, we've been partnering with the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards to create short film portraits that capture the visionary talent and dedication of the laureates. These films are a way to bring Canadians into the celebration—and also stand as lasting works of cinematic art in their own right. As we mark the 25th anniversary of the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards, our GGPAA collection has grown to a remarkable 76 films. We're honoured to be part of the GGPAA once again and wish you all the best on 25 outstanding years!" said Claude Joli-Coeur, Government Film Commissioner and Chairperson of the National Film Board of Canada.

This year the Gala Awards show will be live streamed by broadcast partner CBC/Radio-Canada on cbc.ca and radio-canada.ca as part of their 2017 programming. In addition, CBC/Radio-Canada will air a one-hour special presentation of the Gala, on both CBC and ICI Radio-Canada Télé, on June 30, 2017 at 9 p.m. EST.

Tickets for the **Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Gala** go on sale to the public on March 9 at noon ET at the NAC Box Office in Ottawa and through Ticketmaster, 1-888-991-2787 or www.ticketmaster.ca.

Created in 1992 under the distinguished patronage of the late Right Honourable Ramon John Hnatyshyn, then Governor General of Canada, and his wife Gerda, these prestigious awards are presented annually to Canadians whose accomplishments have inspired and enriched the cultural life of our country. Nominations for these highly acclaimed awards are submitted by members of the public to recognize artists who have made a lifetime commitment and contribution to the performing arts in Canada.

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For more information or to arrange an interview with a 2017 recipient, please contact:

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