



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

**NEWS RELEASE**

**CELEBRATING CANADIAN TALENT:  
2016 GOVERNOR GENERAL'S PERFORMING ARTS AWARD LAUREATES  
ANNOUNCED**

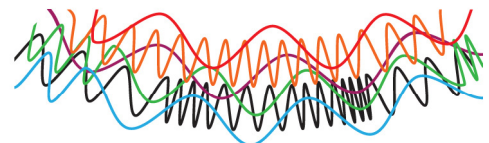
**MONTREAL, April 14, 2016** – The Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Foundation is pleased to announce this year's recipients of Canada's most prestigious performing arts awards.

The 2016 laureates of the **Governor General's Performing Arts Awards (GGPAA) for Lifetime Artistic Achievement** are:

- **Susan Aglukark, O.C.** – Singer-songwriter and humanitarian
- **Marie Chouinard, O.C.** – Artist, choreographer, writer and teacher
- **Ben Heppner, C.C.** – Dramatic tenor and radio host
- **Robert Lantos, C.M.** – Film and television producer
- **Suzanne Lebeau** – Children's playwright and artistic director

The Lifetime Artistic Achievement Awards are accompanied by two complementary awards. The **Ramon John Hnatyshyn Award for Voluntarism in the Performing Arts** will be given this year to **John D McKellar, C.M.**, while world-renowned singer and entertainer **Michael Bublé** will receive the **National Arts Centre Award**, which recognizes exceptional recent work by a performing artist.

"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 arts create wonderful spaces in which to explore the various aspects of the human experience in all its complexity,” noted His Excellency David Johnston, Governor General of Canada. “They have the power to stir within us unique emotions, to whisk us away to extraordinary places and give voice to the ineffable. They provide a window into the unknown, a glimpse at fascinating worlds. Let’s celebrate the outstanding contributions of some of our greatest artists and volunteers, whose works and influence on Canada’s cultural life are an incredible source of inspiration.”

“The Canada Council for the Arts is proud to support performing artists at all stages of their careers, including as a funder and co-founder of the GGPAA. In the coming years, we will be increasing our investments in Canadian talent so that more and more Canadians can experience and benefit from it,” said Simon Brault, O.C., Q.C., Director and CEO, Canada Council for the Arts.

In addition to honouring the 2016 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 actor, director and arts advocate **Albert Millaire, C.C., C.Q.** and 2006 Governor General’s Performing Arts Award recipient, and the **protégé** is Quebec playwright **Benjamin Pradet**.

The 2016 laureates will be honoured at various events in Ottawa in June, culminating in the Governor General’s Performing Arts Awards Gala presented by Enbridge at the National Arts Centre on Saturday, June 11 at 6:30 p.m. “Enbridge invests in supporting performing arts and artists because we are committed to helping Canadians thrive by creating culturally vibrant communities—spaces that offer opportunities to be enriched by cultural experiences and to enjoy a better quality of life,” said D’Arcy Levesque, Enbridge’s Vice President, Enterprise Communications and Corporate Social Responsibility. “It is our privilege to celebrate such inspiring and talented individuals, and we applaud their contributions to the Canadian cultural landscape. On behalf of Enbridge, I’d like to offer our congratulations to each of this year’s laureates.”

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 spirit and passion of our laureates. These films share the talent and dedication of these artists with Canadians everywhere, and also stand on their own as lasting works of cinematic art. This year, our collection of GGPAA shorts will grow to 70 films. It’s a truly inspired body of work, and a fitting tribute to our country’s performing arts talent. We’re honoured to be part of this wonderful celebration,” said Claude Joli-Coeur, Government Film Commissioner and Chairperson of the National Film Board of Canada.

Media are invited to attend the gala red carpet event at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, on Saturday, June 11 as of 6:30 p.m.

Tickets for the **Governor General’s Performing Arts Awards Gala** go on sale to the public on April 14 at 10 a.m. at the NAC Box Office and through Ticketmaster, 1-888-991-2787 or [www.ticketmaster.ca](http://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.

Join us on Twitter and Facebook!

GGPAA: @GovGPAA | @PrixGGAS | [facebook.com/ggawards.prixgg](https://facebook.com/ggawards.prixgg) | #GGawards

ARTS NATION: @ARTS\_NATION | @NATIONENART | [facebook.com/artsnation.nationenart](https://facebook.com/artsnation.nationenart) | #artsnation

– 30 –

For more information or to arrange an interview with a 2016 recipient, please contact:

**Western Canada & the Prairies:**

Mallory McCredie  
403-531-0331 ext. 253  
[mmccredie@national.ca](mailto:mmccredie@national.ca)

**Ontario:**

Lauren Poplak  
416-848-1378  
[lpoplak@national.ca](mailto:lpoplak@national.ca)

**Quebec and the Maritimes:**

Alex-Sandra Thibault  
514-843-2375  
[athibault@national.ca](mailto:athibault@national.ca)