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News Release

CHRISTOPHER DEACON NAMED NEW PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE

June 12, 2018 – OTTAWA (Canada) – After an extensive national search that began in November 2017, the Board of Trustees of the National Arts Centre (NAC) today announced Christopher Deacon as the new President and Chief Executive Officer of the organization, effective immediately. He succeeds Peter Herrndorf who stepped down from the position on June 2, 2018.

Christopher Deacon, 59, was born in Montreal, Quebec. He has more than 35 years of professional experience managing orchestras, including 22 years as Managing Director of the NAC Orchestra. He is the first-ever person in the NAC's 49-year history to be promoted from within the organization to become President and CEO. (A full biography can be found at the end of this release).

"The NAC conducted a rigorous and disciplined search to find the best arts executive to lead Canada's National Arts Centre," said Adrian Burns, Chair of the Board of Trustees, who led the recruiting committee, comprised of four board members, two staff, an artist and two outside members. "We found the right person right here at the NAC to provide the vision and leadership necessary to guide the organization into its next half-century. Few people know the NAC as well as Christopher Deacon."

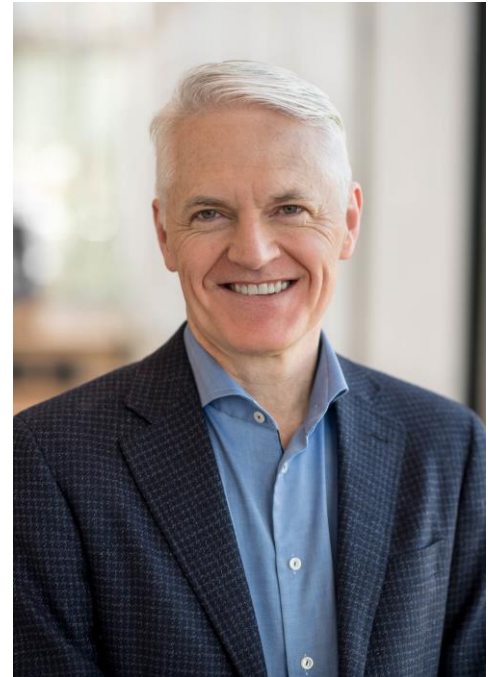
Mr. Deacon has played an instrumental part of the outstanding executive leadership team under Peter Herrndorf during a period that saw the NAC achieve some of the greatest artistic successes in its storied history.

"Christopher Deacon is a champion of the performing arts in Canada," said Peter Herrndorf. "He's got a proven record as a risk-taker and as an adventurous arts administrator leading highly ambitious projects."

As the Managing Director of the NAC Orchestra, Christopher Deacon has led many of the Orchestra's boldest initiatives in recent memory. They include the seven-city China Tour in 2013 that included eight concerts and 80 education events, as well as the 2014 UK Tour, the largest Canadian initiative overseas to mark the centenary of Canada's entry into the First World War.

He also spearheaded the Orchestra's most ambitious production in its history, [Life Reflected](#). Through that project, Christopher Deacon and NAC Orchestra Music Director Alexander Shelley commissioned four Canadian composers to create works about four remarkable Canadian women. The work was performed to great acclaim at the NAC, across Canada during the Canada 150 Tour and at the Luminato Festival. In 2019, it will be performed internationally as part of the NAC Orchestra's 50th Anniversary tour of Europe.

Christopher Deacon has also championed music education and community engagement, both in the National Capital and across the country. He has played a significant role in key aspects of the NAC's most recent successes and in laying the foundation for the NAC's future. For example, he chaired the internal steering committee overseeing the Architectural Rejuvenation and Production



Renewal projects, with a combined budget of \$225.4 million, which are dramatically revitalizing not only the NAC building, but also the institution itself.

In his new role as President and CEO, Christopher Deacon will drive the development of bold initiatives on the NAC's four stages in the Nation's Capital, as well as oversee the organization's national mandate in support of artists across the country. He will champion the NAC's new emphasis on creation, both on its stages, and through the *National Creation Fund*, a \$25 million venture capital fund for artists and arts organizations across Canada who want to create ambitious new work in music, theatre and dance. And he will continue to shape the NAC's evolution as the "living room of the city" through free programming in the NAC's public spaces.

"I am humbled by the trust the Board has shown in me by making this appointment," said Christopher Deacon. "The National Arts Centre is a place of dreams for artists and producers in Canada. It is the place where many do their best work, a destination that says they have 'arrived'. Or the launching pad for their future artistic path. I love what the NAC means to Canadians and I have a passion for what it could become in the next chapter of its development."

REACTION TO CHRISTOPHER DEACON'S APPOINTMENT

"Christopher has been able to transform and modernize the image of the NAC among Canada's classical music community by making it a leader in innovation and creativity," said Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Music Director of New York's Metropolitan Opera, the Orchestre Métropolitain de Montréal, as well as the Philadelphia Orchestra. "His success continues to be a source of inspiration for Canadian artists. This appointment signals excellent years ahead for the NAC."

"I am thrilled for both Christopher and the National Arts Centre," said Donna Feore, the renowned Canadian theatre director and choreographer noted for her work with the Stratford Festival, and Creative Producer and Stage Director of the NAC's *Life Reflected* multimedia project. "His understanding of the art and care of the artist makes him an ideal choice. I have spent the last several years developing *Life Reflected* with Christopher. This was a hugely ambitious and innovative project. His vision, passion and guidance were critical to the success of the entire project. His respect for the artists involved allowed all of us to venture fearlessly into this new artistic endeavour. He is a wonderful collaborator and will make an outstanding leader."

"I am delighted that Christopher Deacon is taking the helm at the National Arts Centre," said Dr. Susan Dyer Knight, Memorial University's Chancellor and Founder/Artistic Director Emerita of Newfoundland's Shallaway Youth Choir, which has collaborated on many concert and music education initiatives with the NAC Orchestra for over 15 years. "The NAC is about storytelling and change-making through the arts, which inspires and strengthens Canadians, their communities and our national fabric. Christopher Deacon understands that. For as long as I've known him, he has enabled that mandate. He listens, connects, inquires, encourages, celebrates and builds. He's a terrific choice for this position."

"I have great respect for Christopher's artistic vision," said Jocelyn Morlock winner of the JUNO Award for the 2018 Classical Composition of the Year for her work for "My Name is Amanda Todd", the multimedia work commissioned by the NAC Orchestra that touched on cyberbullying and mental health. "When Christopher called to tell me how the NAC wanted to tell the story of Amanda and other heroic women through *Life Reflected*, I thought 'This is groundbreaking. What a brilliant idea.' Right away I knew I wanted to be part of it."

"In 2015, Christopher Deacon came to Eskasoni to meet our family and community members about *I Lost my Talk*," said Ann Joe, daughter of the late Mi'kmaw poet and elder Rita Joe who wrote the poem on which one of the four commissions that make up *Life Reflected* is based. "I said 'Are you sure it's going to work?' But he was fearless. He had confidence in everyone, the community and the artists. He really gave them the push that they needed to make it happen. I was in awe of the whole project. It was as if the artists were all gentle warriors for my mother's message of reconciliation. And I don't think it could have happened without Christopher's leadership."

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Annabelle Cloutier

Executive Director of Communications and Public Affairs
National Arts Centre
613 947-7000 x260
annabelle.cloutier@nac-cna.ca

Carl Martin

Senior Communications Advisor
National Arts Centre
613 947-7000 x560
carl.martin@nac-cna.ca

CHRISTOPHER DEACON ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND OFFICIAL PHOTO

Follow Christopher Deacon on Twitter [@Orchestra](https://twitter.com/Orchestra)
The official photo of Mr. Deacon can be downloaded [here](#).

CHRISTOPHER DEACON: BIOGRAPHY AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Christopher Deacon was born on October 22, 1958, in Montreal. He grew up in Gatineau, Quebec.

Passionate about music, Mr. Deacon trained as a composer. He studied piano, harmony and solfège at the Conservatoire de Musique du Québec in Hull. He later received a Bachelor of Music degree in Composition from the University of Toronto. Before coming to the NAC, he was Director of Operations for the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, and Coordinator of Grants and Artists at the National Youth Orchestra of Canada. He began his arts administration career in 1982 as the administrator of the Toronto new music concert series Arraymusic.

Christopher Deacon joined the National Arts Centre Orchestra as Tour Manager in 1987. He became Orchestra Manager in 1989 and Managing Director in 1996. Under Mr. Deacon's leadership, the NAC Orchestra has developed a well-earned reputation as one of the most ambitious and innovative touring music ensembles in North America. He planned and executed dozens of complex tours featuring hundreds of concerts and music education events to countries such as China, the U.S., Mexico, Israel, Italy, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom – as well as to numerous communities throughout Canada.

Vitaly interested in contemporary music and the creation of new work, Christopher Deacon has helped usher in a variety of initiatives in support of Canadian creators such as the National Arts Centre Award for Canadian Composers, the NAC Composer Program, and commissions for the creation of more than 25 new compositions.

Christopher Deacon's passion for new music was evident in his relentless support for the creation of a bold multimedia orchestral work called [Life Reflected](#), the NAC Orchestra's largest production ever, produced and directed by Donna Feore. In 2016, with Music Director Alexander Shelley, he commissioned three outstanding female composers and one male composer - Zosha Di Castri, Jocelyn Morlock, Nicole Lizée, and John Estacio – to create works about four exceptional Canadian women: Roberta Bondar, Rita Joe, Alice Munro, and Amanda Todd. The NAC Orchestra presented the work during its recent Canada 150 tour and is set to take it to Europe as part of its next major tour in 2019. Vancouver composer Jocelyn Morlock's work "My Name is Amanda Todd" won the JUNO Award for the 2018 Classical Composition of the Year.

Christopher Deacon has also championed digital outreach at the NAC Orchestra through the development of various initiatives such as podcasts, online streaming and distance learning, as well as traditional media such as television and CDs.

Christopher Deacon was chair of the steering committee overseeing the NAC's \$225.4M Architectural and Production Renewal Project. Despite tight timelines for planning and

construction, the first phase of the NAC's expanded and rejuvenated building was opened on time on July 1, 2017 – 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation – by HRH Prince Charles, former Governor General David Johnston and Heritage Minister Mélanie Joly, and has garnered widespread praise.

Christopher Deacon led the recruitment search for the Orchestra's former Music Director Pinchas Zukerman in 1998, and the search for the current Music Director Alexander Shelley. Both music directors have transformed the NAC Orchestra into a top-tier international orchestra.

Deacon worked closely with Pinchas Zukerman to expand the Orchestra (from 46 to 62 musicians) and introduce a varied repertoire that had broader appeal for audiences at the NAC and on tour.

He introduced several initiatives to attract younger, more diverse audiences to the Orchestra, notably Casual Fridays, WolfGANG Sessions, and collaborative creations such as [Life Reflected](#) and – with the NAC's Executive Producer of Dance Cathy Levy – [ENCOUNT3RS](#).

He worked with Pinchas Zukerman and successive directors of education to greatly expand the reach and impact of the NAC Orchestra's education and outreach programming including the creation of the Young Artist Program, the Summer Music Institute, the ArtsAlive.ca Website, and partnerships across Canada and internationally.

Education and community engagement programming has expanded during his tenure. The NAC Orchestra created the Summer Music Institute in 1999 which has since provided training for over 1,000 exceptionally gifted young artists from across Canada and around the world, and the Music Alive Program which provides in-classroom music experiences for children in mostly rural schools in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Nunavut.

Christopher Deacon lives in Ottawa with his wife Gwen Goodier. Together they have a daughter, Charlotte, born in 1997. He is step-father to Ms. Goodier's children, Katherine and Peter.