



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

NEWS RELEASE

**CELEBRATING CANADIAN TALENT:
2019 GOVERNOR GENERAL'S PERFORMING ARTS AWARDS LAUREATES
ANNOUNCED**

OTTAWA, February 28, 2019 – The Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Foundation is pleased to announce the recipients of Canada's highest honour in the performing arts.

The laureates of the **2019 Governor General's Performing Arts Awards (GGPAA) for Lifetime Artistic Achievement**, which recognize artists who have made an indelible contribution to cultural life in Canada and around the world, are:



Photo: Pierre-Étienne Bergeron

- **Louise Bessette, C.M.** – Concert pianist

Louise Bessette is recognized worldwide as an outstanding performer and promoter of 20th- and 21st-century music. A versatile and engaging artist, she has had a significant impact on the field of contemporary classical piano, and has introduced the works of Quebec and Canadian composers to audiences across North America, Europe and Asia. She has premiered works written especially for her by such esteemed Canadian creators as Serge Arcuri, Simon Bertrand, Lorraine Desmarais, François Dompierre, José Evangelista, Anthony Rozankovic, and Raoul Sosa, to name only a few. With remarkable talent, passion and determination, she has forged a career path that is unique in Canada.

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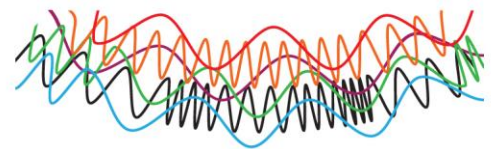




Photo: Ann Baggley

- **Colm Feore, O.C.** – Stage, film and television actor

Colm Feore’s extraordinary career as a stage and screen actor has earned him international acclaim. From *Thirty-Two Short Films About Glenn Gould* and *The Red Violin* to *Bon Cop*, *Bad Cop*, his many roles in Canadian films alone have showcased his remarkable depth and versatility. He regularly appears at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival and has more than 140 film and TV credits to his name. Fluently bilingual, he is an eloquent champion of the arts in Canada and a distinguished cultural ambassador to the world.

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Photo: Jon Sturge

- **Rick Mercer, O.C.** – Satirist, comedian, screenwriter, actor and humanitarian

Rick Mercer has channelled his acerbic wit and keen insight into a career as one of Canada’s foremost political and social commentators. Renowned for his starring roles in the satirical TV shows “This Hour Has 22 Minutes,” “Talking to Americans,” “Made in Canada,” and “Rick Mercer Report,” he has built a loyal fan base eager to hear his views on everything from the shenanigans on Parliament Hill to homophobic bullying in schools. His work has consistently earned top ratings even as he challenged public discourse on important political and cultural issues with his outspoken and very Canadian humour.

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Photo: Jean-François Gratton

- **Lorraine Pintal, C.M.** – Actress, director, writer and artistic director

In a career spanning over 45 years in theatre, television, radio and film, Lorraine Pintal has distinguished herself as an exceptional actress, director, cultural animator and arts advocate. She has directed more than 150 stage productions, produced several TV series, hosted a literary radio show, and served on the boards of numerous arts organizations. As artistic director and general manager of Montréal's Théâtre du Nouveau Monde since 1992, she has revitalized the organization and created a diverse program ranging from classic to contemporary plays (Molière, Sophocles, Chekhov, Brecht, Botho Strauss) and new works by Quebec writers (Michel Marc Bouchard, Evelyne de la Chenelière, Réjean Ducharme, Carole Fréchette, Claude Gauvreau, Michel Tremblay) that have gone on to tour Canada and the world.

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Photo: Johan Persson

- **Mavis Staines, C.M.** – Innovative dance educator, collaborator and leader

Visionary dance educator Mavis Staines has revolutionized the way we teach and understand classical ballet. Her leadership of Canada's National Ballet School over the past 30 years has reshaped the landscape of ballet in Canada and sparked an international conversation about classical training, with a focus on progressive, holistic approaches in such areas as pedagogy, mind-body awareness, creativity, technology in the arts, and community engagement. As a performer, educator and artistic director, she has guided generations of professional dance artists and audiences towards a more thoughtful and informed connection to dance as a dynamic, 21st-century art form.

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The Ramon John Hnatyshyn Award for Voluntarism in the Performing Arts, which recognizes outstanding contribution by an individual or group in voluntary service to the performing arts in Canada:



Photo: Vadim Daniel

- **E. Noël Spinelli, C.M.**

An energetic and successful business leader, Noël Spinelli is also an exceptional volunteer who has generously supported the performing arts, especially music, for over five decades. Driven by a desire to share his passion for music by making it accessible to everyone, he has launched numerous projects and events that have made the Montréal borough of Lachine a destination for classical music lovers, and have contributed to the vitality of the cultural community in Montréal and Canada.

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The National Arts Centre Award, which recognizes work of an extraordinary nature by an individual artist or company in the past performance year:



Photo: James White

- **Sandra Oh** – Actor and producer

Sandra Oh is a versatile actor and accomplished producer whose dynamic performances and compelling screen presence have won popular and critical acclaim. She is proud of her Korean heritage, and her work in film and on television has been groundbreaking for her passionate advocacy for diversity and inclusion in casting. She is the co-executive producer and star of the hit BBC America spy series “Killing Eve,” for which she won a Golden Globe, a Screen Actors Guild Award and a Critics’ Choice Award for Best Actress in a Drama Series, and earned a Primetime Emmy nomination. She also co-hosted the 76th annual Golden Globe Awards (2019), the first Canadian and the first person of Asian descent to do so.

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The unique **Mentorship Program**, generously supported by The Keg Spirit Foundation, provides a way for past GGPAA recipients to inspire the next generation by offering guidance to talented Canadian artists in mid-career. The participants for 2019 are:



Photo: Cosmos Image

- **Alanis Obomsawin, O.C. – Mentor**

Alanis Obomsawin (GGPAA 2008), a member of the Abenaki Nation, is one of Canada's most distinguished documentary filmmakers, a passionate advocate for education and social justice, and a proud defender of Indigenous culture. As a writer, director and producer, she has created a legacy of groundbreaking films that capture complex human stories. Her work both celebrates the rich heritage of her people, and sheds light on the injustices and conflicts faced by Indigenous communities today.

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- **Gop Bartibogue – Protégé**

Gop Bartibogue is a First Nations artist and filmmaker from the Mi'kmaq community of Esgenoopetitj, commonly known as Burnt Church, New Brunswick. His passion is to use his filmmaking talents to help raise public awareness and build sustainable relationships to co-create a healthier planet.

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Learn more about the GGPAA [Mentorship Program](#).

“Canada is a magnificent country of spectacular natural beauty, and our artists are among our nation’s greatest assets,” said **Douglas Knight**, Chair and CEO of the Governor General’s Performing Arts Awards Foundation (GGPAAF), and **Anik Bissonnette**, Co-chair of the Foundation. “The laureates we honour with the Governor General’s Performing Arts Awards are true gems. Their talent enriches us all, and through their art, they allow each and every one of us to sparkle with happiness.”

The 2019 laureates will be honoured at two events in Ottawa, culminating in the Governor General’s Performing Arts Awards Gala presented by Air Canada at the National Arts Centre on Saturday, April 27 at 6:30 p.m. Jayne Watson, CEO of the National Arts Centre Foundation, said, “We are thrilled to have a beloved Canadian brand join us in this celebration of our country’s performing arts luminaries. We extend our sincerest thanks to Air Canada for their generous support as Presenting Sponsor, and look forward to a spectacular 2019 GGPAA Gala.”

These awards would not be possible without the support of our [partners](#) at the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Canada Council for the Arts, and the National Arts Centre (NAC), which is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2019 with an array of special programming and activities throughout the year. As well, each year the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) creates incomparable short films that capture the essence of the laureates, and will premiere at the Awards Gala at the NAC on April 27 and online on NFB.ca. Earnscliffe is proud to serve as official communications partner for a second consecutive year. Watch congratulatory videos from our partners, the [Canada Council for the Arts](#), the [National Arts Centre](#) and the [National Film Board of Canada](#).

The Governor General’s Performing Arts Awards Foundation recognizes Associate Media Partner CBC/Radio-Canada, which will produce exciting digital content about the GGPAA laureates on [cbc.ca](#) and [radio-canada.ca](#), and across CBC/Radio-Canada’s digital platforms.

Tickets for the **Governor General’s Performing Arts Awards Gala** go on sale to the public on Thursday, February 28 at 8:00 a.m. ET through Ticketmaster, 1-888-991-2787 or [nac-cna.ca/ggawards](#).

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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– 30 –

For more information or to arrange an interview with a 2019 recipient, please contact:

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