



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

**NEWS RELEASE**

**CELEBRATING CANADIAN TALENT:  
2020 GOVERNOR GENERAL'S PERFORMING ARTS AWARDS LAUREATES ANNOUNCED**

**OTTAWA, February 27, 2020** – 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 **2020 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:



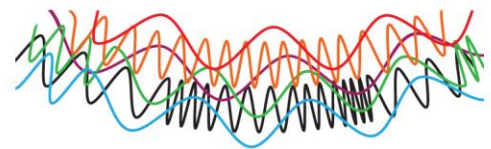
Howard J. Davis

**Tantoo Cardinal, C.M.** – Film, television and stage actor and activist

In a career spanning 50 years and more than 120 film, television and theatre roles, Métis actor Tantoo Cardinal has helped transform the face of film and television when it comes to portraying Indigenous people and stories. One of the most widely recognized First Nations actors of her generation, she has portrayed complex and diverse characters and challenged negative stereotypes of Indigenous culture and communities. As a performer, mentor, and cultural and environmental activist, she has blazed a trail with her talent, widening and improving the path for others to follow.

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Bo Huang

### **Alexina Louie, O.C.** – Composer

Alexina Louie is one of Canada’s most celebrated and sought-after composers. A versatile, imaginative and prolific creator, she has written for all musical genres, from piano, voice and orchestra to opera and film; her orchestral works have been performed by leading international ensembles, and her music has been selected for productions by the National Ballet of Canada. Her distinctive style—a blend of Asian and Western influences—draws from a wide spectrum of sources, from her Chinese heritage to her theoretical and performance studies. Though she is a thoroughly Canadian composer, her musical voice is heard, recognized and acclaimed around the world.

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Kevin Calixte

### **Zab Mabougou** – Choreographer, dancer, instructor, philosopher and writer

Zab Mabougou is the founding artistic director of Zab Mabougou / Compagnie Danse Nyata Nyata, a Montréal-based contemporary dance company. A pioneer of dance in Canada, she is known for intensely physical, dynamic works that explore the capacity of movement to express what she calls “our situation in the world.” She has created more than 20 dance works, and her movement technique, LOKETO—a contemporary approach that draws on the rhythms of traditional Central African music and dance—has become a model of its kind. She has achieved international recognition in the fields of arts, research and education, and her contributions as a choreographer, dancer, instructor, philosopher and writer continue to enrich the collective discourse on art and cultural diversity.

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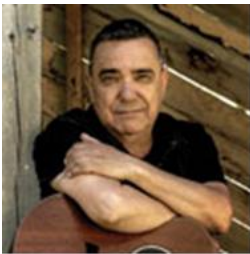
Caitlin Cronenberg

**Catherine O’Hara, O.C.** – Actor and writer

Catherine O’Hara is an acting legend whose on-screen creations have imprinted themselves on our cultural consciousness. A gifted and generous collaborator, she has brought her creative genius to many groundbreaking comedy productions and ensembles. From her Emmy® Award-winning work on the sketch comedy series “SCTV” and her lead roles in Christopher Guest’s mockumentary films, to her iconic character on the hit CBC TV comedy “Schitt’s Creek,” she is a cultural trailblazer whose international success has inspired many artists and helped pave the way for the next generation of women in comedy.

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Jean-Charles Labarre

**Florent Vollant** – Singer–songwriter and guitarist

Innu singer–songwriter and guitarist Florent Vollant has been active on Quebec’s music scene for four decades, first as part of the award-winning duo Kashtin and more recently as a solo artist. A proud cultural ambassador and respected mentor, he has recorded six albums, founded a recording studio for Indigenous musicians, and created a songwriting circle for Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth. His songs of hope, diversity and inclusion, coupled with his passionate defence of our natural world, have earned him international recognition.

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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:



Aleksandar Antonijevic

### **Lynda Hamilton**

Lynda Hamilton has made it her mission to provide performing artists with the support they need to thrive in an industry that is exciting and fulfilling, yet often fraught with financial hardship. A generous volunteer, she has shared her time, expertise and resources with numerous organizations, notably the Dancer Transition Resource Centre (DTRC), the Artists' Health Alliance, the Artists' Health Centre at Toronto Western Hospital, the University of British Columbia (UBC), the Canadian Senior Artists Resource Network, and the Valleyview Artist Retreat in Caledon, Ontario.

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**The National Arts Centre Award** recognizes work of an extraordinary nature by an individual artist or company in the past performance year. The NAC Award is generously sponsored by Boston Pizza International Inc.



Guy Aroch

### **Ryan Reynolds** – Actor, producer, screenwriter, entrepreneur and activist

Ryan Reynolds is one of Canada's most beloved and widely recognized actors. In a repertoire ranging from TV sitcoms to animated and feature films, he has established himself as a versatile and engaging performer with a charismatic and quirky persona. Most recently, he has earned popular and critical acclaim for his portrayal of the title character in the hugely successful action movies *Deadpool* and *Deadpool 2*.

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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 2020 are:



Odette Fouche

### **Suzanne Lebeau – Mentor**

Playwright Suzanne Lebeau (2016 GGPAA), co-founder of Le Carrousel theatre company, is recognized internationally as a leader in contemporary young people’s theatre. Her plays have been translated into 29 languages, and she is among the most-produced Quebec writers in the world. She has tackled sociocultural issues rarely found in dramatic writing for young audiences and explored “dangerous” emotional zones, pushing the boundaries of the possible and the permissible while constructing a world of hope.



Brigitte Thériault

### **Marie-Eve Huot – Protégée**

Marie-Eve Huot has always had a passionate interest in young audiences. She trained at the National Theatre School of Canada, and in the fall of 2016 she took over from Suzanne Lebeau as artistic co-director (alongside Gervais Gaudreault) of Le Carrousel theatre company.

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

“Pride in national heroes, like Olympic Gold Medalists, unites the country. Our 2020 laureates are national heroes whose art inspires, informs and delights,” 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 2020 laureates will be honoured at three 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 25 at 8:00 p.m. “We are delighted to welcome Air Canada back as Presenting Sponsor for the second year in a row,” said Jayne Watson, CEO of the National Arts Centre

Foundation. “Having a well-loved Canadian brand support these celebrations is incredible, and we are grateful for Air Canada’s generous support.”

Craig Landry, Vice President of Air Canada and co-chair of the GGPAA National Committee of volunteers, congratulates the laureates in [this video](#).

We would like to thank Craig’s co-chair, Amoryn Engel, Honorary Chair Emmanuelle Gattuso, and the leaders from across the country who served on the committee and helped champion the GGPAA Gala.

Thanks also to the many sponsors and donors who make the Governor General’s Performing Arts Awards Gala possible, including Presenting Sponsor Air Canada, Associate Sponsors La Fondation Emmanuelle Gattuso, Labatt Breweries of Canada, Manulife, Boston Pizza International Inc., and Instagram, and National Partners Mizrahi Developments and Netflix. Click here for a complete list of our partners and sponsors.

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). As well, each year the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) creates incomparable short films that capture the essence of the laureates, and will première at the Awards Gala at the NAC on April 25 and online on NFB.ca. Earncliffe is proud to serve as official communications partner for a third 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, whose leading role in supporting Canadian culture will include celebrating the richness and diversity of GGPAA laureates’ achievements and sharing their stories with Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Tickets for the **Governor General’s Performing Arts Awards Gala** go on sale to the public on Thursday, February 27 through Ticketmaster, 1-888-991-2787 or [nac-cna.ca/ggawards](http://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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**For more information or to arrange an interview with a 2020 recipient, please contact:**

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