



**NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE  
CENTRE NATIONAL DES ARTS**

Canada is our stage. Le Canada en scène.



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

## News Release

# THE NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE AND THE GOVERNOR GENERAL'S PERFORMING ARTS AWARDS FOUNDATION ANNOUNCE A ONE-HOUR TELEVISION SPECIAL ON CBC/RADIO-CANADA

*Produced by the National Arts Centre with Vérité Films, the bilingual television special will celebrate the 2021 Governor General's Performing Arts Awards laureates on November 26*

**JUNE 2, 2021 – OTTAWA, CANADA** – The National Arts Centre (NAC), in partnership with the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Foundation and Vérité Films, is pleased to announce a one-hour television special on CBC/Radio-Canada that will celebrate the 2021 laureates of Canada's highest honour in the performing arts.

Normally an annual highlight of the Canadian performing arts calendar, the 2020 Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Gala at the NAC was postponed because of the pandemic. With the continuing uncertainty of the public health situation, this year's celebration will instead become an exciting one-hour special broadcast on **CBC Television, ICI TÉLÉ** and the free [CBC Gem](#) and [ICI TOU.TV](#) streaming services on **Friday, November 26 at 7 p.m. ET.**

The bilingual show, complete with moving tributes, exciting performances, and music by the National Arts Centre Orchestra, will celebrate the extraordinary achievements of the laureates, who are some of Canada's greatest artists. The broadcast, produced by the National Arts Centre with Vérité Films, will be led by a stellar artistic team that includes award-winning executive producer Virginia Thompson and highly acclaimed director Joel Ivany, co-creator of *Messiah/Complex*. The show will be filmed in locations across the country and internationally, following all necessary health and safety protocols as required.

"Pride in national heroes, like Olympic gold medalists, unites the country," said **Douglas Knight**, Chair and CEO of the [Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Foundation](#), and **Anik Bissonnette**, Co-chair of the Foundation. "Our 2021 laureates are national heroes whose art inspires, informs and delights."

"This past year demonstrated just how important artists are to our lives and to our well-being," said [NAC President and CEO Christopher Deacon](#). "We are honoured to pay tribute to some of our country's most extraordinary artists and performing arts volunteers, and grateful to our partners at the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Foundation and to CBC/Radio-Canada for making this national broadcast a wonderful celebration that all Canadians can enjoy, in English and French."

"This has been a challenging year for artists and performers," said [CBC/Radio-Canada President and CEO Catherine Tait](#). "We're delighted to be working with the National Arts Centre and the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Foundation to honour this year's recipients and to celebrate their outstanding creative talent. Congratulations to each and every one of them!"

## LIFETIME ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

The broadcast will pay tribute to the laureates being honoured for Lifetime Artistic Achievement. These artists have made an indelible contribution to cultural life in Canada and around the world. They are:

### **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.

*Howard J. Davis*

[Read biography](#)

### **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.

*Bo Huang*

[Read biography](#)

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



Zab Maboungou is the founding artistic director of Zab Maboungou / Compagnie Danse Nyata Nyata, a Montreal-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.

*Kevin Calixte*

[Read biography](#)

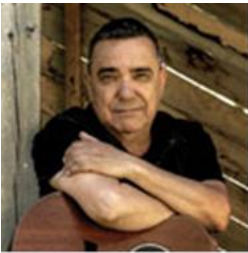
## Catherine O'Hara, O.C. – Actor and writer



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.

Caitlin Cronenberg  
[Read biography](#)

## 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.

Jean-Charles Labarre  
[Read biography](#)

## NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE AWARD



In addition to the Lifetime Achievement Awards, the CBC/Radio-Canada televised special will honour the recipient of the National Arts Centre Award, which is given every year to recognize work of an extraordinary nature by an individual artist or company in the past performance year. This year's recipient is the actor, producer, screenwriter, entrepreneur and activist **Ryan Reynolds**.

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*.

Guy Aroch  
[Read biography](#)

## RAMON JOHN HNATYSHYN AWARD FOR VOLUNTARISM IN THE PERFORMING ARTS



The broadcast will also celebrate the Ramon John Hnatyshyn Award for Voluntarism in the Performing Arts, which recognizes an outstanding contribution by an individual or group in voluntary service to the performing arts in Canada. This year's recipient is **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, the Artists' Health Alliance, the Artists' Health Centre at Toronto Western Hospital, the University of British Columbia, the Canadian Senior Artists Resource Network, and the Valleyview Artist Retreat in Caledon, Ontario.

Aleksandar Antonijevic  
[Read biography](#)

## IN ADDITION TO THE CBC/RADIO-CANADA BROADCAST

### SHORT FILMS BY THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA

The National Film Board of Canada (NFB) is a partner of the GGPAA. Every year, the NFB creates incomparable short films that capture the essence of the laureates. This year's short films will be released to the public on November 26. They will also be shared on social media and can be enjoyed online at [NFB.ca](http://NFB.ca), along with more than 90 short films of past GGPAA laureates. [Watch a message](#) from the National Film Board of Canada.

### MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

The Governor General's Performing Arts Awards includes a [Mentorship Program](#), generously supported by The Keg Spirit Foundation. It provides a way for past GGPAA recipients to inspire the next generation by offering guidance to talented, mid-career Canadian artists. This year's participants are:

#### 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.

*Odette Fouche*

[Read biography](#)

#### Marie-Eve Huot – Protégée



Marie-Eve Huot belongs to the new generation of artists who are committed body and soul to writing and staging plays for young audiences. In 2007, she founded Théâtre Ébouriffé, where she premiered five plays. In 2016, she was appointed artistic co-director of Le Carrousel, a Montreal-based children's theatre company. Her work as a director has been presented in Canada, France and Spain.

*Brigitte Thériault*

[Read biography](#)

(The Mentorship Program will not be part of the broadcast.)

## THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

We wish to thank the sponsors and donors who make the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards possible, including La Fondation Emmanuelle Gattuso, The Keg Spirit Foundation, Amazon, Gail Asper and Martha Lou Henley.

The Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Foundation recognizes Broadcast 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. This year the GGPAA celebration will be broadcast on CBC Television, ICI TÉLÉ and the free [CBC Gem](#) and [ICI TOU.TV](#) streaming services on Friday, November 26 at 7 p.m. ET. The program will also be available on demand for a limited time on both [CBC Gem](#) and [ICI TOU.TV](#).

These awards would not be possible without the support of the Department of Canadian Heritage and the [Canada Council for the Arts](#). [View the video message](#) from the Canada Council for the Arts. [Earnscliffe Strategy Group](#) is proud to serve as official communications partner for a fourth consecutive year.

## ABOUT THE GOVERNOR GENERAL'S PERFORMING ARTS AWARDS

The Governor General's Performing Arts Awards are Canada's highest honour in the performing arts. 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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## ABOUT THE NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE

The National Arts Centre (NAC) is Canada's bilingual, multi-disciplinary home for the performing arts. As part of its strategic plan, the NAC's vision is to lead and support the renewal of the performing arts sector. The NAC presents, creates, produces, and co-produces performing arts programming in various streams—the NAC Orchestra, Dance, English Theatre, French Theatre, Indigenous Theatre, and Popular Music and Variety—and nurtures the next generation of audiences and artists from across Canada. The NAC is located in the National Capital Region on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe.

## ABOUT VÉRITÉ FILMS

[Vérité Films](#) is an award-winning boutique production company committed to stories from original and authentic voices. Led by Virginia Thompson, Vérité has created and/or produced over 300 episodes of award-winning television in the areas of comedy, drama, children and youth, documentary, animation and performing arts. Vérité is best known for developing and producing Canada's highest-rated comedy franchise of all time, **Corner Gas**, with Brent Butt and David Storey of 335 Productions. The franchise includes the smash hit series **Corner Gas Animated**, **Corner Gas: The Sitcom** and **Corner Gas: The Movie**. Virginia Thompson has executive produced the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Gala since 2015.

– 30 –

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