



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

NEWS RELEASE

**CELEBRATING CANADIAN TALENT:
2022 GOVERNOR GENERAL'S PERFORMING ARTS AWARDS LAUREATES ANNOUNCED**

OTTAWA, February 23, 2022 – The Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Foundation is pleased to announce this year's recipients of Canada's highest honour in the performing arts.

The laureates of the **2022 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: Hélène Dansereau

Fernand Dansereau, C.M. – Film and television screenwriter, director and producer

Fernand Dansereau is a pioneer of Quebec film and television. Highly respected within the industry, he has written, produced or directed landmark works that have been acclaimed by colleagues and audiences alike; he has moved thousands of viewers with such television series as *Le parc des Braves* and *Les filles de Caleb*, and, more recently, with his trilogy of films on aging. With a keen understanding of the working classes and an instinct for hope in all things, he takes a clear and compassionate look at contemporary realities and strives to make the language of cinema accessible to everyone. As the founding president of the Institut national de l'image et du son, a professional multimedia training centre in Montréal, he continues to inspire the next generation today.

Watch Mr. Dansereau's announcement video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E6hGNn4Ei2s>



Photo: ACTRA

Rita Shelton Deverell, C.M. – Television broadcaster, theatre artist, scholar and activist

Throughout her distinguished career in broadcasting, journalism and theatre, Rita Shelton Deverell has stood out for her innovation, creativity and inclusion. Driven by her

commitment to social justice, she has focused on telling the stories of those whose voices are often unheard. She co-founded VisionTV, the world's first multifaith, multicultural network, and is one of the first Black women in Canada to be a television host and network executive. An inspiring mentor, she is a role model for young artists, students and audiences alike.

Watch Dr. Deverell's announcement video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wUXW6fyJl6Y>



Photo: Karl Simone

David W. Foster, O.C. – Songwriter, composer, performer, producer and philanthropist

David Foster is one of Canada's most successful popular music writers and producers. He has worked with leading music artists across the country and around the world, and helped launch the careers of such exceptional talents as Celine Dion, Michael Bublé and Josh Groban. A generous philanthropist, notably through his eponymous foundation, he has donated his time and talent to more than 400 charities, and has hosted, produced or directed numerous benefit concerts.

Watch Mr. Foster's announcement video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qqWztqC8dE>



Photo: Sean Howard

Tomson Highway, O.C. – Author (plays, novels, non-fiction) and pianist/songwriter

Tomson Highway is one of Canada's most acclaimed writers and performers. His work shines a light on Indigenous people and culture; his plays (which include the award-winning *The Rez Sisters* and *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*) are taught and performed around the world. A classically trained pianist, he has lectured and performed across Canada and abroad, and is a highly entertaining and sought-after speaker on topics ranging from music and literature to diversity in the workplace.

Watch Mr. Highway's announcement video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=afwkCsKYDzU>



Photo: Tony Chong

Linda Rabin, C.M. – Dancer, teacher, choreographer and somatic movement educator

A pioneer of contemporary dance in Canada, Linda Rabin has more than 50 years of experience as a dancer, teacher and choreographer. As a somatic movement educator, she helps artists and individuals from all backgrounds realize their personal and creative processes, both onstage and in their daily lives. An explorer by nature, she has travelled widely and is keenly interested in the cultures and rituals of different countries. As a workshop leader across Canada and internationally, she generously shares her lifelong passion: exploring movement as art, as a transformational process, and as a healing and spiritual practice.

Watch Ms. Rabin's announcement video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S6gJSPNE0fQ>

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: Marcel Druwé

Michelle Smith

Michelle Smith is a rare pearl indeed: a dedicated volunteer with a background in finance who loves fundraising. As such, she is often called upon for her generosity, creativity and boundless energy. Through her active involvement with and support for many Francophone community and arts organizations in her home province of Manitoba, she has made an indelible contribution to the cultural and linguistic vitality of her community.

Watch Ms. Smith's announcement video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MGHGd8MP3UI>

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



Photo: © Rolex / Anoush Abrar

Crystal Pite, C.M. – Choreographer and director

In a choreographic career spanning three decades, Crystal Pite has created more than 50 works for dance companies in Canada and around the world. She is the founding artistic director of the Vancouver-based company Kidd Pivot, world renowned for radical hybrids of dance and theatre that are assembled with a keen sense of wit and invention. Ms. Pite is known for works that courageously address such challenging and complex themes as trauma, addiction, conflict, consciousness and mortality; her bold and original vision has earned her international acclaim and inspired an entire generation of dance artists.

Watch Ms. Pite’s announcement video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=niv4a3MFr7c>

“The arts play a vital role in our lives, which has been made powerfully evident as we face great challenges during the pandemic,” said Douglas Knight, Chair and CEO of the Governor General’s Performing Arts Awards Foundation (GGPAAF), and Anik Bissonnette, Co-Chair of the Foundation. “While we celebrate and congratulate the exceptional 2022 Awards laureates, we should also pause and be grateful to all Canadian artists, and their supporters, who have been bringing us light and a sense of community in difficult times.”

“The paramount importance of artistic creation and the irreplaceable role of the artists at the heart of our individual and collective lives have emerged with force during the pandemic,” stated Simon Brault, Director and CEO of the Canada Council for the Arts. “Music, voices, words, dance and moving images help us stay connected to the world and to our own destiny. These awards to extraordinary artists are a public recognition of art as an essential service, for maintaining social ties and for protecting our right to happiness.”

“Artists tell stories that celebrate our diversity and bring us together,” said NAC President and CEO Christopher Deacon. “They inspire us—both as individuals and as a country—to be better, and to make our world better. As a founding partner of the Governor General’s Performing Arts Awards, we are honoured to celebrate some of Canada’s greatest artists and arts volunteers and the crucial role they play in the life of our nation.”

The 2022 laureates will be honoured at two events in Ottawa, culminating in the Governor General’s Performing Arts Awards Gala at the National Arts Centre on Saturday, May 28 at 8:00 p.m. “We are delighted to announce that long-time GGPAF champion, Donald K. Johnson, O.C., has committed a leadership gift of \$1M to support the Awards for the next 10 years,” said Jayne Watson, CEO of the National Arts Centre Foundation.

A resident of Toronto, Mr. Johnson shared: “My gift to the GGPAA gives me satisfaction in knowing that the performing arts have more funding so that they can continue to flourish. Philanthropy is a true passion for me.”

We would like to thank the Honourable Margaret McCain, C.C., O.N.B. for her support as Honorary Chair, and the leaders from across the country who served on the National Committee of Volunteers, led by Kate Alexander Daniels, and helped raise the necessary funds for the GGPAA Gala.

Thanks also to the many sponsors and donors who make the Governor General’s Performing Arts Awards Gala possible, including The Azrieli Foundation, Bonnie & John Buhler, Boston Pizza International Inc., Margaret Fountain, C.M., DFA (h) & David Fountain, C.M., The Keg Spirit Foundation, Labatt Breweries of Canada, Manulife, Meta, and the Honourable Bill Morneau & Nancy McCain.

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). Compass Rose is our Communications Partner. 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 May 28 and online on NFB.ca.

“We’re delighted to join again with the Governor General’s Performing Arts Awards Foundation to honour excellence in Canadian performing arts, creating film portraits that capture the talent and dedication of our GGPAA laureates while standing on their own as works of cinematic art. This year we will reach a milestone of 105 films—a testament to the hard work of so many talented filmmakers, producers and creative teams. Thanks to them and, of course, to our great laureates, and to our partners at the GGPAA,” said Claude Joli-Coeur, Government Film Commissioner and NFB Chairperson.

“We’re proud to play a leading role in supporting Canadian culture and celebrating the richness and diversity of this year’s GGPAA laureates’ achievements. As the Media Partner of the Governor General’s Performing Arts Awards, we will be sharing their artistic contributions and stories with Canadians from coast to coast to coast,” said Catherine Tait, President and CEO, CBC/Radio-Canada.

Tickets for the **Governor General’s Performing Arts Awards Gala** go on sale to the public on Thursday, February 24 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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For more information or to arrange an interview with a 2022 laureate, please contact:

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