



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

NEWS RELEASE

**CELEBRATING CANADIAN TALENT:
2023 GOVERNOR GENERAL'S PERFORMING ARTS AWARDS LAUREATES ANNOUNCED**

OTTAWA, February 23, 2023 – 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 **2023 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: Olivier Clertant

Michel Marc Bouchard, O.C. – Playwright, screenwriter, librettist and teacher

Michel Marc Bouchard's bold poetic vision is universal and timeless in its exploration of human relationships, particularly the notion of the outsider and the queer universe. His plays have been translated into two dozen languages and performed around the world; several have been adapted for film. He has curated major historical and thematic exhibitions, and teaches regularly at the National Theatre School of Canada.

Watch Michel Marc Bouchard's [announcement video](#).



Photo: Chris Nicholls

Molly Johnson, O.C. – Singer–songwriter and humanitarian

Acclaimed as one of the best female jazz vocalists of our time, Molly Johnson has captivated audiences across Canada and Europe with her performances of jazz standards and original pieces. As the founding artistic director of Toronto's Kensington Market Jazz Festival, she has helped hundreds of performers to flourish, and through her work as co-founder and producer of the Kumbaya Foundation, she has raised awareness of and funds for people living with HIV/AIDS.

Always ready to speak out against racism and injustice, she has been actively involved with numerous charitable and service organizations.

Watch Molly Johnson's [announcement video](#).



Photo: Alejandro Santiago

James Kudelka, O.C. – Choreographer

James Kudelka is among North America's most versatile and innovative dance artists. His creative output reflects his eclectic interests, rich movement vocabulary, and theatrical sensitivity. His choreographic works range from recreations of full-length ballet classics (*Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker*) to one-act creations that are rich in psychological implication and human drama. He has explored evolving dance and theatrical styles, and is equally at home working with solo artists, small contemporary troupes and large ballet companies.

Watch James Kudelka's [announcement video](#).



Photo: Noémie R. Lavoie

Rosemarie Landry, C.M. – Soprano and voice teacher

Recognized worldwide as an exceptional interpreter of French vocal works and a leading authority on French-language music, soprano Rosemarie Landry has made a significant contribution to classical music and Canadian culture. She has performed internationally in recital, concert and opera, both live and on radio and television, and appeared with leading orchestras and at chamber music festivals. A respected professor at the Université de Montréal, she also regularly gives masterclasses at renowned schools and universities around the world.

Watch Rosemarie Landry's [announcement video](#).



Photo: Jason Quigley

k.d. lang, O.C. – Singer–songwriter and activist

Singer–songwriter k.d. lang is known for her wide-ranging musical talent, distinctive and androgynous style, and hauntingly pure mezzo-soprano voice. She has played an important role in the recognition and development of country and popular music in Canada, and her unique creative contribution has added a new dimension to contemporary music. A noted activist, she publicly came out as a lesbian in the early 1990s and is a strong advocate for the gay rights movement, as well as for animal rights and HIV/AIDS care and research.

Watch k.d. lang’s [announcement video](#).

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: V. Tony Hauser

John Kim Bell, O.C.

John Kim Bell is one of Canada’s most decorated Indigenous leaders. Widely recognized for his work as an activist, entrepreneur and fundraiser, he established the Indspire charitable organization and the Indspire Awards in celebration of Indigenous achievement. His creative vision, cultural leadership, inexhaustible energy and passionate commitment have earned him many awards and honours.

Watch John Kim Bell’s [announcement video](#).

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



Photo: George Pimentel

Paul Sun-Hyung Lee – Actor, writer, comedian and geek

A versatile actor, writer, comedian and television host, Paul Sun-Hyung Lee is best known for his starring role as family patriarch Mr. Kim (“Appa”) in Korean–Canadian playwright Ins Choi’s hit play *Kim’s Convenience* (2011) and its hugely popular television adaptation (2016–21). The show brought the Korean–Canadian immigrant experience into the cultural conversation, first in Canada and then around the world, and established Mr. Lee as a model and an inspiration for a generation of Asian actors.

Watch Paul Sun-Hyung Lee’s [announcement video](#).

Ryan Reynolds and Blake Lively will be the Honorary Chairs of the 2023 GGPA Gala National Committee. The National Arts Centre would like to thank Ryan Reynolds, 2021 National Arts Centre Award recipient of the Governor General’s Performing Arts Awards, and his wife Blake Lively for agreeing to serve as Honorary Chairs of the GGPA Gala’s National Committee of Volunteers, led by Jim Treliving, C.M., and Sandi Treliving, which is raising the funds for the GGPA Gala.

“The arts play a vital role in our lives, which has been made powerfully evident as we faced 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 2023 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 breadth of extraordinary talent and impressive contributions made by the 2023 laureates is unmistakable,” said Simon Brault, Director and CEO of the Canada Council for the Arts. “In recognizing and celebrating what these artists have given and achieved, we are also applauding the performing arts as a whole; the body of work of these artists has enabled countless connections and is worthy of as many thanks and congratulations.”

“Each year, Canadians artists amaze us with their creativity and vision. The incredibly inspiring stories they share bring us together and celebrate the beauty and diversity of Canada,” said NAC President and CEO Christopher Deacon. “The National Arts Centre, as a founding partner of the Governor General’s Performing Arts Awards, is extremely proud to celebrate some of Canada’s greatest artists and arts volunteers and the crucial role they play in the culture of our nation.”

The 2023 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 27 at 8:00 p.m. "We are thrilled to have one of the most respected financial institutions in Canada and globally join us in this celebration of our country's performing arts luminaries," said Jayne Watson, CEO of the National Arts Centre Foundation. "We extend our sincerest thanks to RBC for their generous support as Presenting Sponsor, and look forward to a spectacular 2023 GGPAA Gala. We also thank Ryan Reynolds and Blake Lively for joining our efforts to celebrate Canadian artists."

"Congratulations to our 2023 laureates, who have inspired so many people worldwide throughout their careers," said Mark Beckles, Vice-President, Social Impact & Innovation at RBC. "RBC understands the important role that the arts, across all genres, play in our communities. Our ongoing partnership with the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards is a powerful demonstration of our commitment and recognizes the incredible impact that these artists have in bringing Canadian talent to the world stage. Congratulations, laureates!"

Thank you, Peter Herrndorf (1940-2023)

The Governor General's Performing Arts Awards mourns the loss of Peter A. Herrndorf, an extraordinary Canadian cultural leader who died last week. Along with co-founder Brian Robertson, and the late Governor General Ray Hynatshyn and his wife Gerda, Peter founded the GGPAA in 1992. The GGPAA Foundation will always be grateful to Peter for his vision to create these Awards that have enabled Canada to honour its greatest artists and arts volunteers for more than 30 years.

Thank you to our partners

Thanks also to the many sponsors and donors who make the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Gala possible, including Lead Donor Donald K. Johnson, O.C., Boston Pizza International Inc., Labatt Breweries of Canada, Manulife, The Keg Spirit Foundation, The Azrieli Foundation, Bonnie & John Buhler, Margaret Fountain, C.M., DFA (hc), DHL (hc), & David Fountain, C.M., the Honourable Bill Morneau & Nancy McCain, Rogers Communications, and Telefilm Canada.

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 premiere at the Awards Gala at the NAC on May 27 and online on NFB.ca.

"Through the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards, the NFB will once again be celebrating Canadian excellence in its own unique way," said Suzanne Guèvremont, Government Film Commissioner and Chairperson of the National Film Board of Canada. "For the 15th year, we're privileged to be bringing together talented filmmakers, NFB producers and creative teams from across the country, in pursuit of one goal: developing and creating vibrant short films that shine a spotlight on the artists and arts volunteers of Canada's performing arts. These films are a part of our collective memory in their own right, and they help ensure that the invaluable contributions of those who enrich Canada's cultural heritage are accessible to the public. Congratulations to all the recipients!"

“Once a year, Canada comes together to honour the performing artists who have made immeasurable contributions to the cultural mosaic of our country. As part of our commitment to supporting Canadian culture, CBC/Radio-Canada is proud to be the Media Partner of the GGPAA and share the celebration of these remarkable laureates from coast to coast to coast,” said Catherine Tait, President and CEO, CBC/Radio-Canada.

Created in 1992 by the late Peter Herrndorf, C.C., and Brian Robertson, 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.

Tickets for the **Governor General’s Performing Arts Awards Gala** go on sale to the public on Thursday, February 23 through Ticketmaster, 1-888-991-2787 or nac-cna.ca/ggawards.

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For more information or to arrange an interview with a 2023 laureate, please contact:

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