



News Release

TOM JACKSON TO MENTOR SARAH ROBERTSON IN 2018 GOVERNOR GENERAL'S PERFORMING ARTS AWARDS MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

May 22, 2018 – OTTAWA (Canada) – Canada's National Arts Centre (NAC) is delighted to announce that the renowned actor, musician and activist **Tom Jackson** has chosen to mentor the multidisciplinary artist **Sarah Robertson** through the 2018 Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Mentorship Program. Made possible with support from The Keg Spirit Foundation, the program allows past recipients of the Governor General's Performing Arts Award, Canada's highest honour in the performing arts, to give back to the next generation. Through the program, Tom will work with Sarah as she embarks on a theatrical research and creation project about the impact of play.

Tom Jackson (2014 GGPA for Lifetime Artistic Achievement) is a triple-threat actor, musician, and activist whose achievements in each discipline are exceptional. Now, at an age when most are pulling back, the 69-year-old Calgary-based star is barreling towards the busiest and most glittering chapter in his towering 40-odd-year run at the forefront of contemporary film, TV, and music. Tom's extensive charitable work — in particular, helming the long-running Huron Carole Christmastime concert tours for Canadian food banks plus multiple other initiatives benefitting disaster relief — is arguably his crowning achievement.

Sarah Robertson is a multi-disciplined theatre artist and actor who also works in dance and choreography, writing, singing, visual arts, self-producing and rapping. While working and presenting shows at Calgary's science centre, TELUS Spark, she began to learn about the importance of risk, failure, self-directed play and the scientific approach to learning. She is now finding her interests moving towards active play, for both adults and children, and the role of play in childhood and human development.

"Tom Jackson's art and heart arrested me when I first met him," Sarah Robertson said. "I feel delightfully flabbergasted and fortunate to work with him as I seek to learn more about play and create theatre that can call to hearts as Tom's work surely does. I am so grateful to The Keg Spirit Foundation for this opportunity."

"When you encounter Sarah you encounter a vehicle that transports talent, compassion, and a flame of fury," Tom Jackson said. "She will command a better world. God only knows what her influence will have on the lives of her audience. I am honoured to provide some fuel to the fire."

A unique partnership between the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Foundation, the National Arts Centre and The Keg Spirit Foundation, the GGPAA Mentorship Program is designed to offer creative guidance to talented mid-career artists, and serves as an investment in future Canadian artistic achievement. Each year, a past laureate of the Lifetime Artistic Achievement Award is invited to select a professional artist (or artists) to share, learn and grow from the experience and insight of their mentor. In addition to receiving artistic guidance and an honorarium, each protégé is recognized during the GGPAA celebrations in Ottawa, which culminates with the star-studded GGPAA Gala at the NAC.

The Governor General's Performing Arts Awards and the National Arts Centre Foundation are deeply grateful to The Keg Spirit Foundation, which has generously supported the Mentorship Program for 10 consecutive years. Established in 2001, The Keg Spirit Foundation supports organizations that mirror the mentorship that The Keg Steakhouse + Bar has provided to hundreds of thousands of young staff for more than 40 years. In that time, more than \$9 million has been granted to more than 300 charities across North America.

"Through The Keg Spirit Foundation, we are proud to support mentorship programs that enhance learning and facilitate personal and professional growth," said David Aisenstat, President and CEO of The Keg Steakhouse + Bar, and Chairman of The Keg Spirit Foundation. "We are thrilled that Tom Jackson will be sharing his wisdom and experience with Sarah Robertson through the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Mentorship Program in the coming year."

ABOUT THE GOVERNOR GENERAL'S PERFORMING ARTS AWARDS

Created in 1992, the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards are Canada's highest honour in the performing arts. This year's laureates for Lifetime Artistic Achievement are **Andrew Alexander, Geneviève Bujold, Peter Herrndorf, Angela Hewitt, Ginette Laurin** and **Murray McLauchlan**. **Florence Junca Adenot** will receive the Ramon John Hnatyshyn Award for Voluntarism in the Performing Arts, and **Tegan and Sara** will receive the National Arts Centre Award. The laureates will receive the Awards at a special ceremony and reception at Rideau Hall on Friday, June 1. Then on Saturday, June 2, the NAC will host a star-studded gala featuring superb performances, evocative film portraits by the **National Film Board**, and personal tributes by special guest stars.

PARTNERS

The National Arts Centre is proud to produce the 2018 Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Gala in partnership with the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Foundation. The Awards are presented with the support of the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Canada Council for the Arts. The GGPAAF gratefully acknowledges **Birks** as Presenting Sponsor of the GGPAA. Grateful thanks also go to the GGPAA Gala's National Committee of volunteers, led by Honorary Chair Emmanuelle Gattuso.

ABOUT THE NAC

The National Arts Centre collaborates with artists and arts organizations across Canada to help create a national stage for the performing arts, and acts as a catalyst for performance, creation and learning across the country. A home for Canada's most creative artists, the NAC strives to be artistically adventurous in each of its programming streams: the NAC Orchestra, English Theatre, French Theatre, Dance and *NAC Presents*, which showcases established and emerging Canadian artists. The organization is at the forefront of youth and educational activities, offering artist training, programs for children and youth, and resources for teachers in communities across Canada. The NAC is also a pioneer in new media, using technology to teach students and young artists around the globe by creating top-rated podcasts and providing a wide range of NAC Orchestra concerts on demand. The NAC is the only bilingual, multidisciplinary performing arts centre in Canada, and one of the largest in the world.

BIOGRAPHIES

TOM JACKSON

Tom Jackson is a triple-threat actor, musician, and activist whose achievements in each discipline are exceptional. Now, at an age when most are pulling back, the 69-year-old Calgary-based star is barreling towards the busiest and most glittering chapter in his towering 40-odd-year run at the forefront of contemporary film, TV, and music. Tom's extensive charitable work — in particular, helping the long-running Huron Carole Christmastime concert tours for Canadian food banks plus multiple other initiatives benefitting disaster relief — is arguably his crowning achievement. With an estimated \$200 million in combined cash/in-kind value for food banks and disaster relief raised to date, Tom is currently an Ambassador for the Red Cross, was inducted as an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2000, received the 2007 Juno Humanitarian Award, and the Governor General's Performing Arts Award for Lifetime Artistic Achievement in 2014. Multiple additional honours have been bestowed on him over the years, but those above-mentioned three, perhaps more than any others, have cemented Tom's status as one of Canada's most influential, distinguished, and revered sons.

SARAH ROBERTSON

Sarah Robertson is a multi-disciplined theatre artist and actor who also works in dance and choreography, writing, singing, visual arts, self-producing and rapping. Over her eight years of schooling in dance and theatre (Mirror Dance Program, Langley, BC & Rosebud School of the Arts, Rosebud, AB) and the years in between, she has been honing her ability to express deep truths and profound concepts through a myriad of disciplines. Twice during her acting training, Sarah received the *LaVerne Erickson Medal* (named for the founder of Rosebud Theatre), which recognizes her unique perspective on the world, being a facility for ideas and philosophies, thinking outside the box, articulating vision and being able to motivate not only herself, but those around her. This vision has been

developing through all her years of training and is finding profound voice as she zooms in on her passion for play.

While presenting shows at Calgary's science centre, TELUS Spark, she began to learn about the importance of risk, failure, self-directed play and the scientific approach to learning. Robertson produced her own theatre show, making it a science experiment of sorts, where she fully intended to fail (at least a little) in the run of the show. Audiences were brought along on a journey of active play and experimentation, where the outcome was based on risk, play and the possibility of failure. As these passions have expanded and grown, she is finding her interests moving towards active play, for both adults and children, and the role of play in childhood and human development.

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