



NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE CENTRE NATIONAL DES ARTS

Canada is our stage. Le Canada en scène.

News Release

MARGIE GILLIS TO MENTOR ANNE PLAMONDON AS PART OF THE 2023 GGPAA MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

New award: Ralph Escamillan named laureate of the inaugural Emerging Artist Award from RBC, presenting sponsor of the 2023 GGPAA Gala.

May 24, 2023 – OTTAWA (Canada) – The National Arts Centre (NAC) is pleased to announce that internationally acclaimed choreographer and dancer **Margie Gillis** has selected choreographer and dancer **Anne Plamondon** as her protégée under the 2023 Governor General's Performing Arts Awards (GGPAA) Mentorship Program.

In addition, RBC, presenting sponsor of the 2023 GGPAA Gala, is announcing the inaugural laureate of its RBC Emerging Artist Award. Building on its commitment to artists in the early stages of their career, RBC has launched a new award recognizing an emerging Canadian artist. Supported by RBC, and an addition to the 2023 GGPAA Gala, laureates of this new award are selected by an NAC committee.

2023 GGPAA MENTORSHIP PAIRING

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. During this mentorship, Margie will help Anne develop her creative vision of their art.

"I was in my teens when I first saw Margie Gillis dance at the Grand Théâtre de Québec. Her performance opened my eyes to the transcendent power of dance to tell stories and move people," said Anne Plamondon. "Later, Margie inspired me to try solo performance. She is a model of strength and inspiration. I'm very honoured and enthusiastic to be participating in the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Mentorship Program with this dance legend."

"I chose Anne for her talent, which I recognized immediately the first time I saw her," said Margie Gillis. "Like me, she dances solos; like me, she choreographs for others; like me, she is socially engaged with femininity. She has given a lot of thought to what the future may hold, not just for herself but for others. We haven't spent a lot of time together, but whenever we do meet, we lose all sense of time. So it's a real pleasure for me to support Anne in developing her ideas for her next creation."

"Through The Keg Spirit Foundation, we are proud to support mentorship programs that enhance personal and professional growth, and enhance the broader community" said David Aisenstat, Chairman and Founder of The Keg Spirit Foundation. "We are thrilled that widely acclaimed choreographer and dancer Margie Gillis will be sharing her breadth of knowledge with her protégée Anne Plamondon for the next year through the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Mentorship Program."

RALPH ESCAMILLAN, LAUREATE OF THE INAUGURAL RBC EMERGING ARTIST AWARD

The laureate of the first-ever 2023 RBC Emerging Artist Award is **Ralph Escamillan**, a Filipino-Canadian performer, choreographer, teacher and queer community leader based in Vancouver, British Columbia. RBC commissioned ceramic artist Paula Murray to create the Award that will be presented to Ralph Escamillan along with a \$25,000 prize.

“Success in the arts is heavily influenced by the wealth, resources, and cultural capital an individual has access to, and receiving this award uplifts the hard work of artists who don’t have that same access,” said Ralph Escamillan. “By paying forward the continued support I’ve received to the communities who pour into me, I hope to remind and empower queer and racialized artists of our value and necessity to the artistic milieu.”

“RBC is a long-standing supporter of the arts and the important role that it plays in our community,” said Andrea Barrack, Senior Vice President Corporate Citizenship & ESG, RBC. “The National Arts Centre is key to bringing important artistic voices to Canadians. A huge congratulations to Ralph Escamillan as the inaugural recipient of the RBC Emerging Artist award! Your work will continue to build a strong future for the arts.”

BIOGRAPHIES

Margie Gillis – 2023 GGPAA Mentor

Internationally acclaimed dancer and choreographer **Margie Gillis** (GGPAA 2011) is one of Canada’s most influential and prolific dance artists. She is a courageous and free-spirited pioneer of modern dance whose unique naturalistic style has influenced an entire generation of performers. She has created more than 150 works addressing such topics as the feminine consciousness, the natural world, and the transformative process. Teaching, mentoring, and sharing her creative history are an integral part of Margie’s vision, and have provided the impetus for her Legacy Project. She has received many awards and honours, and is celebrating her 50-year career anniversary in 2023.

Anne Plamondon – 2023 GGPAA Protégée

Choreographer, dancer, teacher and curator **Anne Plamondon** made her choreographic debut in 2012 and founded her own company, Anne Plamondon Productions, in 2018. She has danced with major companies in Canada and internationally, including Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, Kidd Pivot, Nederlands Dans Theater 2 and Gulbenkian Ballet. She has also worked with leading choreographers and directors, including Marie Chouinard, James Kudelka, Serge Denoncourt, Marcos Morau and Ina Christel Johannessen. In 2002, she joined Victor Quijada’s company RUBBERBANDance, where she acted as co-artistic director (2006–15), participated in the creation of a dozen works, and was instrumental in developing the RUBBERBAND Method.

Ralph Escamillan – 2023 RBC Emerging Artist Award Laureate

Ralph Escamillan’s company, FakeKnot, creates inclusive performance works that strive to understand the complexities of identity and culture through costume, sound, technology and the body. As an artistic director, Ralph gathers his breadth of experience as a dancer from street, commercial and contemporary dance to create a truly unique choreographic perspective, while also questioning his identity as a queer person of colour. With his latest work, *Piña*, which premiered earlier this month, Ralph explores the parallels between the body and piña, a traditional Philippine fiber made from pineapple leaves.

ABOUT THE GGPAA MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

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, since 2008, 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 or protégée is recognized during the GGPAA celebrations in Ottawa, including the star-studded GGPAA Gala at the NAC.

ABOUT THE GOVERNOR GENERAL’S PERFORMING ARTS AWARDS

Created in 1992, the Governor General’s Performing Arts Awards (GGPAA) are Canada’s highest honour in the performing arts. This year’s laureates for Lifetime Artistic Achievement are Michel

Marc Bouchard, Molly Johnson, James Kudelka, Rosemarie Landry, k.d. lang. John Kim Bell will receive the Ramon John Hnatyshyn Award for Voluntarism in the Performing Arts, and Paul Sun-Hyung Lee will receive the National Arts Centre Award. The laureates will receive the Awards at a special ceremony and reception at Rideau Hall on Friday, May 26. Then on Saturday, May 27, the NAC will host a star-studded gala featuring superb performances and evocative film portraits by the National Film Board of Canada.

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 Presenting Sponsor RBC, 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 (h.c.), DHL (h.c.), & David Fountain, C.M., Ann, John and Roxanne McCaig, the Honourable Bill Morneau & Nancy McCain, Rogers Communications, and Telefilm Canada.

The National Arts Centre is proud to produce the 2023 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. 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 27 and online on NFB.ca.

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 since 2009. 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 50 years. In that time, the foundation has granted more than \$11 million to more than 400 charities across North America.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE

The National Arts Centre is Canada's bilingual, multi-disciplinary home for the performing arts. The NAC presents, creates, produces, and co-produces performing arts programming in various streams—the NAC Orchestra, Dance, English Theatre in collaboration with Black Theatre Workshop, 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 Anishinabe Algonquin Nation.

-30-

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Anicée Lejeune

Communication Strategist
Programs and Special Projects
National Arts Centre
514-237-9553
anicée.lejeune@cna-nac.ca