



NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE
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For immediate release

Des McAnuff receives 2012 National Arts Centre Award

Award to be given at 20th anniversary Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Gala

Calgary (Canada) — Canada's National Arts Centre (NAC) is delighted to announce it is awarding the prestigious 2012 National Arts Centre Award to Des McAnuff. A two-time Tony and Olivier Award winner, Mr. McAnuff is one of Canada's most successful theatre directors and the Artistic Director of the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, which this year celebrates its 60th anniversary.

The National Arts Centre Award, presented annually as part of the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards, recognizes work of an extraordinary nature and significance in the performing arts by an individual artist and/or company in the past performance year.

Mr. McAnuff's year has been exceptional indeed. At the Stratford Shakespeare Festival he directed a celebrated production of *Twelfth Night*. His acclaimed production of *Jesus Christ Superstar* enjoyed an extended run at Stratford, moved to La Jolla Playhouse in California, and is set to open on Broadway this month with its Canadian cast. Mr. McAnuff also directed a production of *Faust* for the Metropolitan Opera (which was also filmed and released in cinemas), opened the second North American tour of *Jersey Boys*, and developed a new musical production of *Doctor Zhivago*, which opened early this year in Seoul, Korea. Mr. McAnuff's achievements over the past year also include film, with the wide cinema release of his production of *The Tempest* starring Christopher Plummer. (Mr. McAnuff's production of *Caesar and Cleopatra*, also starring Mr. Plummer, enjoyed a similar release in 2009, while *Twelfth Night* is scheduled for cinema release this week.)

The year 2011 also saw Mr. McAnuff planning Stratford's 60th anniversary playbill, half of which comprises Canadian works, including three world premieres—*Wanderlust* by Morris Panych and Marek Norman, *The Best Brothers* by Daniel MacIvor, and *Hirsch* by Alon Nashman and Paul Thompson, about the former Stratford artistic director and legendary theatre artist John Hirsch. Mr. McAnuff will also be directing Shakespeare's *Henry V* and Christopher Plummer's one-man show *A Word or Two*.

"Des McAnuff is an outstanding theatre artist and an incredible cultural ambassador for Canada," said NAC President and CEO Peter Herrndorf. "On top of his own exceptional work as a theatre director, he has bolstered the Stratford Shakespeare Festival artistically, attracted wonderful artists to its stages, and programmed a boldly Canadian 60th anniversary season. Thanks to Des McAnuff, countless more people both here and abroad can experience the excellence of Canadian theatre that is Stratford, either on Broadway or on movie screens in communities across this country. These are all remarkable achievements, and it is our great pleasure to recognize them through the National Arts Centre Award."

Born in 1952, Des McAnuff attended Ryerson University and was part of Toronto's burgeoning theatre scene in the 1970s. For 18 years he was artistic director of La Jolla Playhouse, where he directed over 30 productions of Shakespeare and other classics, new plays and musicals. The company's Broadway productions, including *The Who's Tommy*, Billy Crystal's *700 Sundays*, and *I Am My Own Wife*, earned nearly 30 Tony Awards. His production of *Jersey Boys* won four Tony Awards, including best musical.

At Stratford, Mr. McAnuff has produced more than 80 plays, 12 of which he directed. He has strengthened Stratford's acting company and added to the ensemble of internationally renowned directors and other theatre artists. He expanded Stratford's international reach, including the co-production of *Phèdre* in San Francisco, the transfer of *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* to Toronto, and an extended run of Brian Bedford's production of *The Importance of Being Earnest* in New York, for which Mr. Bedford received a Tony Award nomination.

Mr. McAnuff's New York credits include *Crazy Locomotive*, *Mary Stuart*, and his own play *Leave It to Beaver Is Dead*. On Broadway, his credits include *Guys and Dolls* (2009), Aaron Sorkin's *The Farnsworth Invention* (2007), *Jersey Boys* (2006, Tony and Olivier Awards: best musical), Billy Crystal's *700 Sundays* (2004, Tony Award), *How to Succeed...* (1995), *The Who's Tommy* (1993, director/co-author with Pete Townshend, Tony and Olivier Awards: best director; Olivier: best musical), *A Walk in the Woods* (1988), and *Big River* (1985, Tony Awards: best director and best musical). Mr. McAnuff's film credits include *Cousin Bette* and *The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle* (director), *Iron Giant* (producer), and *Quills* (executive producer).

Mr. McAnuff will be honoured during the Governor General's Awards Performing Arts Gala at the National Arts Centre on May 5, 2012. The National Arts Centre Award recipient, chosen annually by a jury of NAC program executives, receives a cash prize of \$25,000, an original work of art by Quebec-based artist Paula Murray, and a commemorative medallion struck by the Royal Canadian Mint. Previous recipients of the National Arts Centre Award include Denis Villeneuve, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Paul Gross, The Tragically Hip, Richard Bradshaw, k.d. lang, Rick Mercer, Marie Chouinard, Angela Hewitt, La La La Human Steps and its artistic director Edouard Lock, Cirque du Soleil, Mario Bernardi, Denis Marleau, Karen Kain, Jon Kimura Parker, Ben Heppner, Robert Lepage, Michel Marc Bouchard and Les Deux Mondes, and Gilles Maheu and CARBONE 14.

- 30 -

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