



NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE  
CENTRE NATIONAL DES ARTS

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For immediate release

**Pete Townshend is the “surprise guest” for the 20<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary Gala of the Governor General’s Performing  
Arts Awards at the National Arts Centre**

**Ottawa (Canada)** —The Who’s **Pete Townshend** performed to a full-house at Canada’s National Arts Centre (NAC), paying tribute to his friend and musical colleague, **Des McAnuff**. McAnuff is the winner of the annual NAC Award, which recognizes work of an extraordinary nature by an individual artist in the past performance year. McAnuff is the former Artistic Director of the Stratford Shakespeare Festival. He recently revived *Jesus Christ Superstar* on Broadway and the production received two Tony Award nominations last week.

McAnuff and Townshend created the rock musical *The Who’s Tommy* in 1992, which opened at La Jolla Playhouse in San Diego, California and then went on to Broadway where it closed after a two year run and 899 performances.

Other special guests of the Governor General Performing Arts Awards gala at the NAC included Booker Prize-winning author **Sir Salman Rushdie**. The author of 11 novels as well as several works of non-fiction, Sir Salman’s novel *Midnight’s Children* won the Booker Prize in 1981, and was named the Best of the Booker—the best winner in the award’s 40-year history—by a public vote.

Sir Salman was one of several special guests who took part in the Gala. They include South Park co-creator **Matt Stone**, actor **Nikki James**, opera singer **Russell Braun**, dancer and choreographer **Peggy Baker**, arts journalist **Shelagh Rogers O.C.**, and **Marie-Hélène Falcon**, founder and artistic director of Festival TransAmériques.

Each of the presenters has a personal connection to this year’s laureates of the Governor General’s Performing Arts Awards, and paid tribute to them during a live performance in Southam Hall hosted by **Colm Feore**. The laureates for Lifetime Artistic Achievement were **Janina Fialkowska**, **Paul-André Fortier**, **Denis Marleau**, **Deepa Mehta**, **Rush** and **Mary Walsh**. Two other distinguished national awards were also conferred as complements to the GGPA for lifetime artistic achievement. This year **Earlaine Collins** received the Ramon John Hnatyshyn Award for Voluntarism in the Performing Arts, while **Des McAnuff** was the recipient of the National Arts Centre Award, which recognizes exceptional achievement over the past performance year.

The Governor General's Performing Arts Awards also feature a unique Mentorship Program, which unites past Lifetime Artistic Achievement Award recipients and talented mid-career

artists. This year's mentor is comedy legend Eugene Levy, who selected a talented young writer and Director from Toronto, Daniel Perlmutter as his protégé.

The National Arts Centre is proud to produce the 2012 Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Gala in partnership with the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Foundation and the National Film Board of Canada. The Awards are presented with the support of the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Canada Council for the Arts.

The GGPAAF gratefully acknowledges Enbridge as Presenting Sponsor of the GGPAF Gala. The GGPAF Gala is made possible in part by its many sponsors. In particular, the National Arts Centre Foundation would like to thank Associate Sponsors **McDonald's Restaurants of Canada Ltd.** for their support of the Inspiration Seats youth section and **Manulife Financial** for its support as our Dinner Sponsor. This year's Mentorship Program is supported by **The Keg Spirit Foundation**. National Partners are **Desjardins Group, Onex Corporation, Pratt & Whitney Canada** and **Weber Shandwick Worldwide**, and **The Printing House** is our official Print Sponsor. The GGPAAF also acknowledges the significant contributions of Regional Partners **Cenovus Energy Inc., Cineplex Media, Cisco Systems Canada Inc., DREAM, Holt Renfrew, Invesco, The Keg Steakhouse & Bar, Kinnear Financial, Mastercard Canada Inc., MTS Allstream, Penn West Exploration, Rogers Communications Inc., The Alvin Segal Family Foundation, Shangri La Hotels, and VIA Rail Canada**. Impresario Partners include **Accenture Canada, Acciona, Aecon Group Inc., Aimia, The Banff Centre, Cement Association of Canada, KPMG LLP, Ledcor, Mark Motors of Ottawa Ltd., McMillan LLP, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP and Trinity Development Group Inc.** Additional in-kind support for the Awards is received from **Ecentricarts, Gowling Lafleur Henderson LLP**, technology partner **IBM, Llama Communications, MacLaren McCann, The Royal Canadian Mint**, and media partners **National Post, The Ottawa Citizen, Le Droit, Clear Channel and the Hill Times and Embassy Magazine**. Grateful thanks also go to the GGPAF Gala's National Committee of volunteers, led by Honorary Chair **The Hon. Hilary M. Weston, CM, O.Ont. of Toronto**; Co-Chairs **Susan Glass** and **Arni Thorsteinson** of Winnipeg; Past Chairs **M. Ann McCaig, CM, AOE, LLD**, and **James S. Kinnear** of Calgary; and all the individuals and families whose philanthropic support helps make these awards possible.

Tickets for the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Gala on Saturday, May 5, 2012 are available at the NAC Box Office and through Ticketmaster, 1-888-991-2787 or at [www.ticketmaster.ca](http://www.ticketmaster.ca).

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