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GOVERNOR GENERAL'S PERFORMING ARTS AWARDS

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THE GOVERNOR GENERAL'S PERFORMING ARTS AWARDS

The Governor General's Performing Arts Awards are Canada's most prestigious honour in the performing arts. In 1992, Peter A. Herrndorf (1940–2023) and Brian Robertson approached then-Governor General Ramon John Hnatyshyn (1934–2002) and his wife, Gerda (1935–2023), with their vision for the Awards. Since that time, the Awards have established themselves as the ultimate recognition from Canadians for Canadians whose accomplishments have inspired and enriched the cultural life of our country.

Laureates of the **Lifetime Artistic Achievement Award** are selected from the fields of classical music, dance, popular music, screens and voices (formerly broadcasting and film), and stages (formerly theatre). Nominations for this award and the **Ramon John Hnatyshyn Award for Voluntarism in the Performing Arts** are open to the public and solicited from across the country. Nominations for the Lifetime Artistic Achievement Award are reviewed by juries of professionals in each discipline; each jury submits a short list to the Board of Directors of the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Foundation (GGPAAF), which makes the final selection.

Each laureate of a Lifetime Artistic Achievement Award receives a commemorative medallion and a \$25,000 cash prize provided by the Canada Council for the Arts.

Recipients of the Ramon John Hnatyshyn Award, which recognizes outstanding contribution in voluntary service to the performing arts in Canada, are selected by the Board of Directors of the GGPAAF. Each laureate receives a commemorative medallion.

Recipients of the **National Arts Centre Award**, which recognizes work of an extraordinary nature in the previous performance year, are selected by a committee of senior programmers from the National Arts Centre (NAC). This award comprises a commemorative medallion and a \$25,000 cash prize provided by the NAC.

All commemorative medallions are generously donated by the Royal Canadian Mint.

The Awards also feature a unique **Mentorship Program** designed to benefit a talented mid-career artist. The Program brings together a past Lifetime Artistic Achievement Award recipient with a next-generation artist, helping them to develop their work, explore ideas and navigate career options. The Program is an opportunity for the laureates of tomorrow to benefit from the creativity and experience of icons who have blazed the trail before them. The Keg Spirit Foundation is the Founding Mentorship Program Partner.

The Awards are administered by the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Foundation, a non-governmental, not-for-profit charitable organization based in Ottawa.

Public nominations are accepted for the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards. For more information, please visit ggpaa.ca.



THE GOVERNOR GENERAL OF CANADA
LA GOUVERNEURE GÉNÉRALE DU CANADA

The Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Gala is an opportunity to celebrate the storytellers and art lovers who are helping to define our country. Tonight, through a number of special tributes and performances, you will see the impact art has on individuals, communities and our country as a whole.

The very best art inspires and challenges us; it connects us to a variety of perspectives. It shows us our wonderful and complex world through different lenses. It can lead to greater respect, understanding, truth and reconciliation. In short, art is transformative.

And the very best art reflects our diverse identities, helping us see ourselves on stage or screen. It can help create an inclusive country.

Tonight, we celebrate the prominent performing artists who have touched our hearts, challenged our perceptions and transported us to new realms.

Measha Brueggergosman-Lee, Ronnie Burkett, Diane Juster, Andrea Martin, Wes "Maestro" Williams, Jenny Belzberg, Mélanie Demers—I congratulate all of you on being honoured today. And I congratulate mentor Susan Aglukark and protégée Angela Amarualik; I know that you will have much to learn from each other.

The Governor General's Performing Arts Awards are a testament to your remarkable achievements, your creativity, your dedication, and the profound impact you have had on our cultural landscape. I am confident that your legacy will continue to inspire future generations of artists.

On behalf of all Canadians, I thank each of you for what you have done for the performing arts and for Canada.

Mary Simon
Governor General of Canada



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



**NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE
CENTRE NATIONAL DES ARTS**

Canada is our stage. Le Canada en scène.

Welcome to the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Gala, celebrating Canada's highest honour in the performing arts.

For over 30 years we have been recognizing the talent and generosity of Canadians excelling in and supporting the performing arts. Tonight, we honour seven unique and gifted individuals who have made our culture richer and have brought magic and understanding into our lives. We are grateful to our laureates for the crucial role they play at home and around the world, and offer them our warmest congratulations.

The Foundation is deeply grateful for the commitment of Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary Simon, Governor General of Canada.

On behalf of the Foundation, thank you for joining us.

Douglas Knight, C.M.
Chair and CEO

Anik Bissonnette, O.C.
Co-Chair

There's something powerful about coming together to celebrate some of Canada's greatest artists and arts volunteers, and to thank them for all that they have meant to us—both in our own lives, and collectively as a country. The NAC is very proud to be a founding partner of the Awards.

Our heartiest congratulations go to this year's extraordinary laureates for Lifetime Artistic Achievement: Measha Brueggergosman-Lee, Ronnie Burkett, Diane Juster, Andrea Martin and Wes "Maestro" Williams. We are thrilled that the superb multidisciplinary artist Mélanie Demers has received the National Arts Centre Award in recognition of an incredible year of performance. And we are so pleased that the incomparable Jenny Belzberg, a true champion of the arts, is this year's recipient of the Ramon John Hnatyshyn Award.

We sincerely thank our NAC Foundation donors from across the country, whose generosity has made this Gala possible. And last but certainly not least, thank you to everyone in the audience for being part of what is sure to be another very special evening.

Christopher Deacon
President and CEO

Guy Pratte, C.M.
Chair, Board of Trustees



Canadian
Heritage

Patrimoine
canadien

The arts represent who we are as a country; they nourish our identity and our collective imagination. They are the social fabric that conveys our creativity and represents our diversity.

The exceptional talents we are honouring at the 32nd Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Gala reflect this spirit of resilience, innovation and beauty that typify our performing arts scene.

Congratulations to the 2024 recipients for their remarkable contributions to enriching our shared cultural heritage. Let's hope that their works continue to shape our lives and enrich our world for years to come.

As Minister of Canadian Heritage, I would like to stress the importance of Arts Nation's cross-Canada cultural initiative, which provides a platform for the boldest and most inspiring voices that can be heard and celebrated in Canada and beyond.

Enjoy the gala!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pascale St-Onge', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The Honourable Pascale St-Onge
Minister of Canadian Heritage

Canada 



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des arts
du Canada

For the 16th year, the National Film Board of Canada is proud to be partnering with the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Foundation to honour our GGPAAs laureates.

Seven new GGPAAs film portraits will now join a growing collection of 119 films—incredible cinematic works created by talented filmmakers, offering a unique perspective on the laureates and their achievements.

Congratulations to all of our laureates—your passion and dedication enrich us all.

To our directors, producers and creative teams, and our wonderful partners at the GGPAAs, thank you for another amazing year.

Across Canada, the performing arts are a powerful medium: they spark thought and feeling, they critique and question, they put forth ideas and provoke change. They are simultaneously a reflection of society and an escape into imagination. But more than anything, the performing arts have the power to bring people together. As they connect us to our humanity, they are an essential part of any society. And the artists and arts sector workers who make the dissemination of the performing arts possible are an invaluable asset for Canada.

As a founding member of the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards and sponsor of the Lifetime Artistic Achievement Award, the Canada Council for the Arts is thrilled to celebrate the 2024 recipients and their illustrious careers. May they continue to inspire, challenge and uplift people from coast to coast to coast, and beyond, for many years to come.

Suzanne Guèvremont

Government Film Commissioner
and Chairperson of the National Film Board of Canada

Michelle Chawla

Director and Chief Executive Officer

LEADERSHIP DONATIONS

The **National Arts Centre Foundation** would like to thank the following individuals for their generous philanthropic support of tonight's Gala.

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The information in this program was complete
and accurate at the time of printing.

Governor General's Performing Arts Award

Governor General's Performing Arts Awards

This prestigious honour in the performing arts was created in 1992 by the Right Honourable Jean Charest and Ramon John Hnatyshyn, then Minister of Canadian Heritage and Minister of the Status of Women. The award is a recognition of the outstanding contributions of artists and arts volunteers to the cultural life of our country. They felt strongly that the arts should be acknowledged and celebrated, and that the outstanding contributions of its artists to the cultural life of our country should be recognized and celebrated. The award is presented to the outstanding artists and arts volunteers who have made a significant contribution to the cultural life of our country. The award is presented to the outstanding artists and arts volunteers who have made a significant contribution to the cultural life of our country.

Canadians more aware of the contributions of our performing artists and arts volunteers to the cultural life of our country. The award is presented to the outstanding artists and arts volunteers who have made a significant contribution to the cultural life of our country. The award is presented to the outstanding artists and arts volunteers who have made a significant contribution to the cultural life of our country.

Governor General's Performing Arts Awards are presented for Lifetime Achievement in the categories of classical music, popular music, film, television, and theatre. Recipients have made a significant contribution to the country's cultural life and have been recognized by the public. The award is presented to the outstanding artists and arts volunteers who have made a significant contribution to the cultural life of our country.

In 2008, and with the support of the Government of Canada, the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Foundation established a Museum of the Performing Arts Award. The museum is a permanent exhibition space that celebrates the contributions of our performing artists and arts volunteers to the cultural life of our country. The museum is a permanent exhibition space that celebrates the contributions of our performing artists and arts volunteers to the cultural life of our country.

THE GOVERNOR GENERAL'S PERFORMING ARTS AWARDS HALL OF HONOUR

Welcome to the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Hall of Honour! This elegant, purpose-built space opened in February 2018 as part of the National Arts Centre's Architectural Rejuvenation project.

Inaugurated in the spring of 2012 on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Awards, this permanent exhibition pays tribute to each recipient from 1992 to the present. It now comprises over 250 beautifully framed photographic portraits of some of this country's most iconic performing artists and arts volunteers, as well as an interactive station linked to the Awards Foundation website, with information about the laureates and the Awards.

The Hall of Honour is a striking commemoration of what the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards stand for. It is an acknowledgement of the outstanding lifetime contribution of Canada's performing artists and performing arts volunteers to the cultural life of our country, and a tribute to their exceptional creativity, which has given such meaning, beauty and joy to all Canadians.

We invite you to take a few minutes this evening to visit the GGPA Hall of Honour, located on the second level of the NAC, on the canal side.



2024 LAUREATES

MEASHA BRUEGGERGOSMAN-LEE

Soprano and faith advocate

Soprano Measha Brueggergosman-Lee's engaging personality, exceptional musicianship and powerful voice have taken her to the major orchestras and concert halls of every continent, as well as the opening ceremonies of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, Canada Day celebrations on Parliament Hill, and a Royal Command Performance for Queen Elizabeth II.

Ms. Brueggergosman-Lee was born in 1977 in Fredericton, New Brunswick. Her parents, Ann Gosman and the late Reverend Sterling Gosman, made it their mandate to develop the gifts of their children from an early age, and she began voice and piano lessons at the age of 7. She has always believed her gifting to be from God; she considers singing an act of worship and her international career as evidence of God's grace and favour over her life.

She has survived morbid obesity, divorce, the loss of two babies, two emergency open-heart surgeries and a hip replacement, and credits her faith in Jesus for inspiring her to see the joy in all areas of her life. Of her bestselling memoir, *Something Is Always On Fire: My Life So Far* (HarperCollins, 2017), she says, "When I titled the book, it felt like every part of my life was in flames. Now, in retrospect, I understand that the fires that rage in my life are there as blessings for me to tend, as opposed to crises for me to tame."

During the COVID pandemic, she presented a series of live-streamed "COVID concerts," produced over 30 music videos for various organizations, and donated her album *Measha JAZZ* to her fans as a way to encourage them through the global crisis. This season, she will release *Planet Measha*, a truly original remix album featuring a host of multilingual hip hop and spoken-word artists, and *Zombie Blizzard*, the highly anticipated album of genre-blurring concert arias composed by her closest musical collaborator, Aaron Davis, to the poetry of her long-time friend, Margaret Atwood.

Measha Brueggergosman-Lee is the host of *Common Ground – Conversations About God* and the artist-in-residence at the Canadian opera company Opera Atelier. Her future goals include a thriving marriage of mutual submission to her husband, Stephen Lee, and raising her sons, Shepherd and Sterling, to become selfless men who laugh easily and love faithfully.

*"They say Aslan
is on the move."*

—C. S. Lewis

Photo: Mathieu Savidant

2024 GGPAA for Lifetime Artistic Achievement – Stages
(formerly Theatre)

RONNIE BURKETT

Puppeteer, playwright, designer and performer

Recognized as one of Canada's foremost theatre artists, Ronnie Burkett has been credited with reinventing the art of puppetry. Provocative, topical, compassionate and entertaining, his work has revitalized puppet theatre, consistently attracting adult audiences who are enthralled by the colourful characters populating his miniature world of big ideas. His productions have been commissioned and presented by major theatres and festivals, and have earned critical and public acclaim across Canada and around the world. He has also shared his knowledge and experience with hundreds of aspiring artists through masterclasses, workshops and lectures.

Mr. Burkett was born in 1957 in Lethbridge, Alberta, and grew up in Medicine Hat. He discovered puppetry at the age of seven, and began touring his own shows around Alberta at 14. He apprenticed in New York with Bil Baird, who famously produced and performed "The Lonely Goatherd" puppetry scene in the movie *The Sound of Music*.

He formed his own company, Ronnie Burkett Theatre of Marionettes, in 1986, and began creating innovative theatrical marionette plays for adults, with themes and characters that would come to embody archetypes of the human condition. "It's the only way I can shrink our confusing, maddening world to a manageable size so I can examine it and try to understand it," he says.

The diversity and depth of his shows reveal his impressive range as a writer, performer and craftsperson. For each production, he draws on a remarkable variety of skills: writing, acting, singing, stand-up, improv, sleight of hand, painting and carpentry. His meticulously constructed marionettes are works of art in themselves. Working solo and appearing onstage throughout each performance, he manipulates and voices every character, from irascible pensioners and faded showgirls to guileless children, talking dogs, and everything in between. His repertoire comprises over a dozen original shows, including the most recent *Wonderful Joe*, which premiered in spring 2024.

Ronnie Burkett is an Officer of the Order of Canada and the recipient of the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta Arts Award, the Herbert Whittaker Drama Bench Award for Outstanding Contribution to Canadian Theatre, two Chalmers Canadian Play Awards, and the Siminovitch Prize (Design), among others.

Photo: Alejandro Santiago



*"I am but a little
one-man band made
into an orchestra
by the many hands who
have lifted me up."*

— Ronnie Burkett

DIANE JUSTER

Singer-songwriter, pianist and arts advocate



Photo: Éric Carrière/TVA Publications

One of Canada's most successful music artists, Diane Juster has been captivating audiences with her talent as a singer and pianist for nearly 50 years. She has written hit songs for such leading Canadian and international performers as Céline Dion, Ginette Reno (GGPAA 1999) and Dalida, and has a rich discography of her own. A tireless advocate for the promotion and protection of the work of Canadian artists, she is the co-founder of the Société professionnelle des auteurs et des compositeurs du Québec (SPACQ).

Ms. Juster was born in 1946 in Montréal. After completing studies in classical piano, she began writing her own songs. She released her first album, *Mélancolie*, in 1974; her discography now comprises 11 albums. She has also composed music for ballet and film.

She has performed in major concert halls for large and appreciative audiences. However, her stage career was relatively short, as her first love has always been composing for others, notably Quebec superstar Ginette Reno, for whom she wrote "Je ne suis qu'une chanson" (400,000 copies sold, 1980 Félix award for Song of the Year, inducted into the Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2007).

In 1981, with lyricist Luc Plamondon (GGPAA 1996), she co-founded SPACQ, which represents the moral, economic and professional interests of Francophone songwriters across Canada and commissioned composers in Quebec.

In 1984, SPACQ established the Society for Reproduction Rights of Authors, Composers and Publishers in Canada (SODRAC), now part of the Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada (SOCAN).

In 2005, Ms. Juster established the SPACQ Foundation to promote, support and honour outstanding Quebec and Canadian songwriters, composers and performers. The Foundation presents more than 16 awards annually, each accompanied by a \$10,000 cash prize.

In September 2022, for the first time in nearly 20 years, she appeared live on stage to perform her hit song "Ce matin" during a celebration of the 90th birthday of actor and singer Dominique Michel (GGPAA 1992).

Diane Juster is a Member of the Order of Canada and an Officer of the Ordre national du Québec.

"Music has influenced, guided, motivated and enriched my whole life. How could I not want to defend its most legitimate rights and promote creation in all its forms?"

—Diane Juster

2024 GGPAA for Lifetime Artistic Achievement – Screens and Voices
(formerly Broadcasting and Film)

ANDREA MARTIN

Actor

Andrea Martin's hilarious characterizations and heart-warming performances have been delighting audiences for over 40 years. A beloved icon of stage and screen, she gained prominence in the 1980s as a regular on the award-winning sketch comedy series *SCTV* (*Second City Television*). Her Broadway career has earned her Tony Awards for featured actor in the musicals *My Favorite Year* (1993) and *Pippin* (2013), and she has an equally impressive list of film and television appearances.

Ms. Martin was born in 1947 in Portland, Maine, and became a Canadian citizen in 2017. Shortly after graduating from college, she moved from New York to Toronto and was cast in a production of *Godspell* alongside a lineup of future legends, including Eugene Levy (GGPAA 2008), Gilda Radner, and Martin Short (GGPAA 2017).

In 1975, she joined the cast of Toronto's Second City stage show, which evolved into *SCTV* and featured comedy greats John Candy, Eugene Levy, Catherine O'Hara (GGPAA 2021), and Dave Thomas. Ms. Martin portrayed a parade of eccentric characters, notably leopard-print-clad station manager Edith Prickley, incomprehensible Eastern European immigrant Pirini Scleroso, and feminist TV host Libby Wolfson. Her work on *SCTV* earned her and the rest of the writing team two Emmys. More recently, she has appeared in *Great News* and *Only Murders in the Building*, also starring Steve Martin and Martin Short.

Ms. Martin's film credits include *Wag the Dog*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, and the hit trilogy *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* (as Aunt Voula). She has also lent her voice to many animated features and series, including *The Rugrats Movie*, *The Simpsons*, *Superman*, and *Sesame Street*.

She has written and produced two one-woman shows: *Nude, Nude, Totally Nude* and *Andrea Martin: Final Days! Everything Must Go!!* Her critically acclaimed memoir, *Lady Parts*, was published in 2014.

Of her wide-ranging career, she says, "One thing led to another; doors opened, I showed up, I did the best I could, and I loved every minute of it. I still do."

Andrea Martin's awards and honours include two Emmy Awards, two Tony Awards, two Drama Desk Awards, four ACTRA Awards, and the Women in Television and Film Award. She was inducted into Canada's Walk of Fame in 2018 and into the Canadian Comedy Hall of Fame (with the rest of the *SCTV* cast) in 2023.

Photo: Jeff Vespa



"Keep the channel open."

— Martha Graham,
in a conversation with
Agnes de Mille



Photo: Andrew Craft

2024 GGPAA for Lifetime Artistic Achievement – Popular Music

WES “MAESTRO” WILLIAMS

Recording artist, actor, author and motivational speaker

Often regarded as the “godfather of Canadian hip hop,” Wesley (Wes) “Maestro” Williams is the first Canadian rapper to achieve mainstream success. His debut album, *Symphony in Effect*, was the first album by a Canadian hip hop artist to reach platinum status, and his landmark single “Let Your Backbone Slide” was the first rap recording to go gold and the first rap song inducted into the Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame. Alongside his musical career, Mr. Williams is also a successful film and television actor, author, and motivational speaker.

Born in 1968 in Toronto, Mr. Williams took piano lessons as a child and became interested in rap and hip hop culture at age 11. In 1984, he and fellow rapper Ebony MC formed a group called Vision Crew and began performing locally. He got his first big break when he appeared on the MuchMusic show *Electric Circus*, and his performing and recording career took off. He has released nine studio albums.

His film and television credits include eight seasons on CBC’s award-winning sitcom *Mr. D*, playing vice-principal Paul Dwyer. He emceed the 2022 East Coast Music Awards, and currently hosts two shows: the sand sculpting reality series *Race Against the Tide* and his own cooking show, *Maestro Chef Wes*, showcasing Maritime cuisine and music.

In 2010, Mr. Williams and his wife co-wrote the motivational self-help book *Stick to Your Vision: How to Get Past the Hurdles & Haters to Get Where You Want to Be*. It won the 2011 White Pine Literary Award, was added to the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) curriculum, and became mandatory reading for Grade 10 students in Nova Scotia. His children’s book *Stick to Your Vision: Young Maestro Goes to School* was published in 2021.

He has participated in round-table discussions on Parliament Hill on the topic of race relations, and has given motivational presentations for TEDx, academic institutions and corporate organizations. In 2023, he established NSCC’s Maestro Fresh Wes Scholarship for Black youth interested in the skilled trades.

Among other honours, Wes “Maestro” Williams has won two Juno Awards and the African Canadian Achievement Award. He was inducted into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame in 2024.

“It has always been important to me as an artist and trailblazer for Black music in Canada to symbolize longevity, perseverance and Canadian heritage, and I will continue to tell young upcoming artists, ‘Don’t make records, make history.’”

—Wes “Maestro” Williams

JENNY BELZBERG

Jenny Belzberg is known across Canada as a passionate community activist and philanthropist. An enthusiastic advocate for the arts and education, and an outstanding volunteer, she has shown exemplary leadership in her involvement in a range of cultural and social action organizations, particularly Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity. With her late husband, Hyman (Hy) Belzberg, she helped promote and develop the arts in her home town of Calgary, Alberta, and has been a prominent force in her community for over 50 years.

Jenny Lavin Belzberg was born in 1928, and was introduced to the arts, particularly classical music, by her mother.

She has chaired and served on the boards of many cultural organizations, including Banff Centre, the National Arts Centre, the Royal Conservatory of Music, the Calgary Philharmonic Society, and Calgary Opera. She is a founding member of the Honens International Piano Competition and served on the committee that established the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta Arts Awards.

Banff Centre is particularly close to Mrs. Belzberg's heart. She was instrumental in establishing the Midsummer Ball, which raises scholarship funds for deserving artists to attend the Centre's professional development programs. In 1992, Banff Centre's board of governors established the Jenny Belzberg Scholarship Endowment in honour of her dedication to supporting artist training in Canada. In November 2020, after a year-long renovation project funded by a transformational gift from the Belzberg family, the Centre's Eric Harvie Theatre reopened as the Jenny Belzberg Theatre.

Mrs. Belzberg is the founder and first chair of the Calgary Arts Partnership in Education Society (CAPES), part of a national program originating with the Royal Conservatory of Music. The organization worked with artists and teachers to apply the concept of "Learning Through the Arts" to the regular school curriculum. The program was adopted by more than 60 Calgary schools.

"Volunteering is really good for your mind, for your health. And when you're caring for others, you gain so much yourself," she says.

Jenny Belzberg is a Member of the Order of Canada and of the Alberta Order of Excellence. Her other awards and honours include the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, Business for the Arts Edmund C. Bovey Award, Alberta Centennial Medal, and an honorary doctorate from the University of Calgary.

Photo: Monique de St. Croix



"Volunteering and helping others helps you. It's enriched my life, and my family's."

— Jenny Belzberg

MÉLANIE DEMERS

Multidisciplinary artist, choreographer, stage director and performer

Multidisciplinary artist, choreographer, director and performer Mélanie Demers is the founding artistic director of Montréal-based contemporary dance company MAYDAY. She is known for complex, highly imaginative works that reflect her fascination with the human condition, the role of the artist in society, the interplay between language and movement, and the powerful link between the poetical and the political. In a prolific career spanning nearly three decades, she has created over 30 works that have toured internationally and captivated audiences and critics alike.

Born in Montréal in 1974, Ms. Demers studied dance, literature and theatre in Québec before returning to Montréal to attend LADMMI (now the École de danse contemporaine de Montréal). She made her choreographic debut in 1996; two years later, she joined O Vertigo under artistic director Ginette Laurin (GGPAA 2018), and danced with that company for close to a decade while continuing to collaborate with emerging choreographers.

In 2007, she founded her own company, MAYDAY. Of the name, she says, “I liked the idea that when you send out a call for help, it’s because there’s still hope; and the idea of taking a chance, of never giving up.” From early works such as *Les Angles Morts* (2006), *Sense of Self* (2008), *Junkyard/Paradise* (2010) and *Goodbye* (2012) to the more recent *Danse Mutante* (2019), *La Goddam Voie Lactée* (2021), *Confession Publique* (2021) and *Cabaret Noir* (2022), the company has charted a vibrant and original course in the landscape of contemporary dance.

In 2022, Ms. Demers made her debut as a theatre director with *Declarations*, by Canadian playwright Jordan Tannahill, produced by Théâtre Prospero (Montréal).

A socially engaged artist, she has taught dance in Kenya, Niger, Brazil and Haiti, where she helped develop two cultural centres. She currently teaches at Canada’s leading dance and theatre schools, and appears regularly on radio and television.

Mélanie Demers has received two awards from the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec for Best Choreographic Work (in 2015, for *WOULD*, and in 2022, for *Confession Publique*) and the 2021 Grand Prix de la danse de Montréal in recognition of the unique imprint she has left on her era.

Photo: Julie Artacho

“There is really nothing more to say—except why. But since why is difficult to handle, one must take refuge in how.”

—Toni Morrison,
The Bluest Eye



YOU CAN HAVE A SAY IN WHO IS HONOURED.

NOMINATE!

Your nomination could determine a future recipient of Canada's most prestigious award in the performing arts. **k.d. lang, Michael J. Fox, Molly Johnson, Martin Short, Wes “Maestro” Williams, Andrea Martin** and **Tantoo Cardinal** are laureates of the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards because they were nominated by people like you!

The process is simple and straightforward.
For details, please visit our website at **ggpaa.ca**.

THE GGPA MEDALLION

The distinctive GGPA medallion, produced by the Royal Canadian Mint, was designed by the Canadian College of Heraldry. Each medallion bears on one side the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards emblem: a coat of arms with the Latin inscription *Artes nos tenent et inspirant* ("The arts engage and inspire us"). On the other side are engraved the name of the recipient and the date, encircled by maple leaves. The medallion is hung from a ribbon striped in burgundy, yellow and blue.

COMPOSITION
90% copper, 10% zinc,
plated with 24 karat gold

WEIGHT
78 grams

DIAMETER
57 mm

FINISH
Frosted background and brilliant relief

Photo: Royal Canadian Mint



THE GOVERNOR GENERAL'S PERFORMING ARTS AWARDS MENTORSHIP PROGRAM



The Keg Spirit Foundation is proud of our 15-year support of the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Mentorship Program. We celebrate the incredible role that renowned artistic mentors have played in the lives of mid-career artists through the years.

With our mandate to support the mentorship of young people, we are honoured to help foster a talented Canadian artist each year who will in turn become a role model in the years to come.

David Aisenstat
Chairman & Founder,
The Keg Spirit Foundation

A unique partnership inaugurated in 2008 between the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Foundation and the National Arts Centre, the GGPAA Mentorship Program serves as a creative catalyst and an investment in future Canadian artistic achievement.

The GGPAA Mentorship Program is designed to offer creative guidance to talented artists in mid-career. 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. Each protégé or protégée receives artistic guidance and an honorarium, and, along with their mentor, attends the GGPAA celebrations.

YEAR	MENTOR	PROTÉGÉ·E
2024	Susan Aglukark, O.C.	Angela Amarualik
2023	Margie Gillis, O.C., C.Q.	Anne Plamondon
2022	Alexina Louie, O.C., O.Ont., FRSC	Christopher Goddard
2021	Suzanne Lebeau	Marie-Eve Huot
2019	Alanis Obomsawin, O.C., G.O.Q.	Gop Bartibogue
2018	Tom Jackson, O.C., LL.D.	Sarah Robertson
2017	Karen Kain, C.C.	Robert Binet
2016	Albert Millaire, C.C., C.Q.	Benjamin Pradet
2015	Howard Shore	Nicole Lizée
2014	Joseph Rouleau, C.C., G.O.Q.	Jean-Philippe Fortier-Lazure
2013	John Murrell, O.C.	Anita Majumdar
2012	Eugene Levy, C.M.	Daniel Perlmutter
2011	Evelyn Hart, C.C.	Heather Ogden
2010	Gordon Pinsent, C.C.	Kevin Loring
2009	Oliver Jones, O.C., C.Q.	Dione Taylor
2008	Veronica Tennant, C.C., LL.D.	Crystal Pite

Special thanks to **The Keg Spirit Foundation**,
Founding Mentorship Program Partner.



Photo: Denise Grant

SUSAN AGLUKARK, O.C.

Mentor

Inuk singer-songwriter Susan Aglukark (GGPAA 2016) is one of Canada's most distinctive music artists. She blends English, Inuktitut, and other Indigenous languages with contemporary pop arrangements to tell the stories of her fellow Inuit and other Indigenous groups. The emotional depth and honesty of her lyrics, her pure, clear voice, and her themes of hope, spirit and encouragement have captivated and inspired listeners from all walks of life. She has released 10 albums and is much in demand as a keynote speaker and workshop facilitator.

Her breakthrough album, *This Child* (1995), sold more than 300,000 copies in Canada, and its lead single, "O Siem," became the first song by an Inuk singer-songwriter to reach number one on the Canadian country and adult contemporary charts. Her latest album, *The Crossing*, was released in 2022.

A passionate advocate for northern Canadian communities and the people who live there, Ms. Aglukark is the founder and program developer of the Arctic Rose Foundation, which helps create emotionally safe environments for creative expression among Indigenous children and youth.

Susan Aglukark is an Officer of the Order of Canada. Her other awards and honours include three Junos, the Allan Waters Humanitarian Award (Juno), the inaugural Aboriginal Achievement Award in Arts & Entertainment, the Canadian Country Music Association's Vista Rising Star Award, and honorary doctorates from five Canadian universities.



Photo: Thor Simonsen

ANGELA AMARUALIK

Protégée

Angela Amarualik was born and raised in Igloolik, Nunavut. Like many other small Indigenous communities, her town had its share of social problems. Ms. Amarualik worked hard to retain a good attitude, improve her circumstances, and be a role model for the younger generation. Starting with the ukulele, she began writing Inuktitut songs in her bedroom closet. Her musical style combines elements of traditional Inuit melodies and throat-singing with pop and folk.

Her self-titled debut album (2018) was nominated for three Indigenous Music Awards and won the award for Best Inuit, Indigenous Language, or Francophone Album. The song "Summa Tamaani" from her second album, *Uvannik* (2022), climbed the charts on the Indigenous Music Countdown, and in 2023, she was named Indigenous Artist/Group of the Year at the inaugural Arctic Music Awards.

As her musical skill evolved, she embarked on a journey of mentorship and outreach, touring and conducting workshops for Inuit youth. During this time, she had the privilege of being mentored by the late Kelly Fraser, a pivotal figure on the Inuit music scene.

As a child, Angela Amarualik was extremely shy, but through music she has become brave, strong and independent. Her dream is to share her Inuit culture, inspire Nunavummiut youth, and create music that people around the world can enjoy.

2024 GOVERNOR GENERAL'S PERFORMING ARTS AWARDS TRIBUTE PERFORMANCE

Executive Producer: **Virginia Thompson**

Director: **Kevin Loring**

Host: **Isabelle Racicot**

With the **National Arts Centre Orchestra**

Alexander Shelley, Music Director

Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser, Guest Conductor

Daniel Desaulniers, Musical Arranger

There will be one 20-minute intermission.

Tributes are listed in alphabetical order
by laureate (Lifetime Artistic Achievement Awards,
Ramon John Hnatyshyn Award,
National Arts Centre Award).

WELCOME SONG

Performers: **Kevin Chief** and **Amber Asp-Chief**

“O CANADA”

Performer: **Angela Amarualik**

Drum dancer: **Sylvia Cloutier**

“SHOW UP”

Music & lyrics: **Andrée Isabelle “Aiza” Ntibarikure**,
Christopher Cargnello and **Christophe Joseph Picard**

Performer: **Aiza**

TRIBUTE TO MEASHA BRUEGGERGOSMAN-LEE



Measha Brueggergosman-Lee: A New Song

Director: **Will Prosper**

Producer: **Jon Montes**

“Au pays où se fait la guerre”

Composer: **Henri Duparc**

Arranger and musical director: **Aaron Davis**

Performers: **Measha Brueggergosman-Lee**,
Timal and **Aaron Davis**

TRIBUTE TO RONNIE BURKETT



The Passion and Puppetry of Ronnie Burkett

Director: **Michelle Mama**

Producer: **Jon Montes**

“A Little Spotlight”

Music & lyrics: **John Alcorn**

Piano/keyboard: **John Alcorn**

Performers: **John Alcorn** and **Laura Hubert**

2024 GOVERNOR GENERAL'S PERFORMING ARTS AWARDS TRIBUTE PERFORMANCE

TRIBUTE TO DIANE JUSTER



Diane Juster: Foundation of a Song

Director: **Gilles Doiron**

Producer: **Christine Aubé**

"Je ne suis qu'une chanson"

Music & lyrics: **Diane Juster**

Performer: **Ginette Reno**

TRIBUTE TO ANDREA MARTIN



Andrea Martin: Nine Lives... and Counting!

Director: **Michelle Mama**

Producer: **Jon Montes**

We Stayed Friends

Performers: **Eugene Levy, Paul Shaffer, Martin Short**

TRIBUTE TO WES "MAESTRO" WILLIAMS



*Wes "Maestro" Williams: Wes to the East—
Forward Movin'*

Director: **Gilles Doiron**

Producer: **Christine Aubé**

Hiphop CndnStyle

Choreographer: **Crazy Smooth**

Dancers: **Crazy Smooth, JC Fresh,
Melly Mel, Mr. Fresh, Tash**

Performer: **Michie Mee**

TRIBUTE TO JENNY BELZBERG



Jenny Belzberg: Home Is Where the Art Is

Director: **Will Prosper**

Producer: **Jon Montes**

Excerpt from **Orphée+** (1774)

Original composition: **Christoph Willibald Gluck**
and **Hector Berlioz**

Adaptation: **Lauren Spavelko**

Director: **Joel Ivany**

Performers: **Etta Fung**, soprano, as *Amour*;
Miriam Khalil, soprano, as *Orphée*

TRIBUTE TO MÉLANIE DEMERS



Mélanie Demers: Artistic Frictions

Director: **Gilles Doiron**

Producer: **Christine Aubé**

Symphonie MAYDAY

Original composition and musicians: **Mykalle Bielinski,**
Florence Blain Mbaye and **Frannie Holder**

Dancer: **Stacey Désilier**

The Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Gala
is an original concept by **Brian W. Robertson** and
David Langer.

Artists are subject to change without notice.

*The information in this program was complete and accurate
at the time of printing.*

CREATIVE AND PRODUCTION

Virginia Thompson

Executive Producer

Mike D'Amato

Executive Director of Production

Kevin Loring

Stage Director

Fran Walker

General Manager

Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser

Guest Conductor

Daniel Desaulniers

Musical Arranger

Peter (Spike) Lyne

Production Manager

Danielle Skene

*Production Consultant
and Stage Manager*

Robin Archer

Karen K. Burrows

Carl Martin

Writers

Karen K. Burrows

Producer, Vérité Films

Robin Archer

Co-Producer, Vérité Films

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John Storgårds
Conductor

Pinchas Zukerman
Conductor Emeritus

Jack Everly
Principal Pops Conductor

Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser
*Principal Youth Conductor and
Creative Partner*
Conductor, 2024 GGPA Gala

FIRST VIOLINS

****Yosuke Kawasaki** (*concertmaster*)

Jessica Linnebach
(*associate concertmaster*)

Noémi Racine Gaudreault
(*assistant concertmaster*)

Manuela Milani

Emily Kruspe

Emily Westell

Carissa Klopoushak

*Martine Dubé

*Andréa Armijo-Fortin

*Erica Miller

*Oleg Chelpanov

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Marjolaine Lambert

Jeremy Mastrangelo

Frédéric Moisan

Leah Roseman

Zhengdong Liang

Winston Webber

Edvard Skerjanc

Mark Friedman

Karoly Sziladi

*Renée London

VIOLAS

Jethro Marks (*principal*)

David Marks (*associate principal*)

****David Goldblatt** (*assistant principal*)

David Thies-Thompson

Tovin Allers

****Paul Casey**

*Mary-Kathryn Stevens

*Sonya Probst

CELLOS

****Rachel Mercer** (*principal*)

Julia MacLaine (*assistant principal*)

Marc-André Riberdy

Leah Wyber

Timothy McCoy

*Desiree Abbey

*Daniel Parker

DOUBLE BASSES

Max Cardilli (*assistant principal*)

Vincent Gendron

Marjolaine Fournier

*Paul Mach

FLUTES

Joanna G'froerer (*principal*)

Stephanie Morin

OBOES

Charles Hamann (*principal*)

Anna Petersen

ENGLISH HORN

Anna Petersen

CLARINETS

Kimball Sykes (*principal*)

Sean Rice

BASSOONS

Darren Hicks (*principal*)

Vincent Parizeau

HORNS

*Florence Rousseau (*guest principal*)

Lawrence Vine

Lauren Anker

Louis-Pierre Bergeron

TRUMPETS

****Karen Donnelly** (*principal*)

*Rob Weymouth (*guest principal*)

Steven van Gulik

TROMBONES

*Steve Dyer (*guest principal*)

Colin Traquair

BASS TROMBONE

Zachary Bond

TUBA

Chris Lee (*principal*)

TIMPANI

*Marc-André Lalonde (*guest principal*)

PERCUSSION

Jonathan Wade

*Andrew Johnson

HARP

*Angela Schwarzkopf (*guest principal*)

KEYBOARDS

*Mark Ferguson

ELECTRIC BASS

*Samuel Cournoyer

GUITAR

*Pascal Richard

DRUMS

*Brian Barlow

Nancy Elbeck

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*Additional musician **On leave

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*Stagehands, Projectionists, Wardrobe,
Hair and Make-Up Mistresses,
Masters and Attendants are members
of I.A.T.S.E. Local 471.*

INSPIRED PORTRAITS FROM THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA

Featured at the Gala and online at NFB.ca, these film portraits capture the talent and spirit of this year's GGPAAL laureates.

They're also creative works of short cinema in their own right, born out of a unique collaboration between laureates and filmmakers.

The NFB has been telling this country's stories for 85 years, and we're proud to work alongside the GGPAAL to celebrate these great Canadians.



GILLES DOIRON

**MÉLANIE DEMERS,
DIANE JUSTER,
WES "MAESTRO" WILLIAMS**

Passionate about the art of cinema, Gilles Doiron left his hometown of Dieppe, New Brunswick, to study at the Toronto Film School. After graduating with honours, he gained valuable experience in Toronto and Montréal before returning to his native region to contribute to the development of New Brunswick's film industry. Over the next decade, Gilles worked on over 50 productions in various roles. His dynamic commitment and determination have opened doors, pushed boundaries and led to several career successes.

MICHELLE MAMA

**RONNIE BURKETT,
ANDREA MARTIN**

Michelle Mama is an award-winning documentarian and television producer. Her directing credits include her first feature-length film, *21 Days to Nawroz*, and episodes of series such as *In the Making* and *Shine True*. Michelle was the lead creative producer on the feature documentary *Summer Qamp* (TIFF 2023) and is currently directing the feature doc *Anti-Diva: The Carole Pope Confessions*. She recently launched boutique production company GAY AGENDA to produce, mentor and create from a defiantly queer lens.

WILL PROSPER

**JENNY BELZBERG,
MEASHA BRUEGGERGOSMAN-LEE**

A visionary filmmaker and fiction screenwriter, Will Prosper is renowned for his artistry and unique approach to cinema, which vividly bring to life underrepresented communities and Afro-descendant cultures. His acclaimed NFB feature documentary, *Kenbe la, Until We Win*, showcases his narrative genius. He's currently developing a groundbreaking documentary project that integrates elements of fiction to convey a compelling story. Will's latest film, *Northern Beats*, was screened at TIFF 2023 and further cemented his status as a masterful cinematic storyteller.

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We are grateful for the efforts of the following volunteers from across Canada, who have worked to secure financial support for these important awards and who are champions of the performing arts in their communities.

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