



NATIONAL FONDATION DU
ARTS CENTRE CENTRE NATIONAL
FOUNDATION DES ARTS

Canada is our stage. Le Canada en scène.

Summer • 2016

Full Circle

A PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE FOUNDATION

Aussi disponible en français

Rita Joe National Song Project empowers Indigenous youth to find their voice and inspire others

In a classroom in an Edmonton high school, eight students sit in a circle with guest artists, Andrea Menard and Robert Walsh. You can see the intensity on their faces as they discuss Rita Joe's poem "*I Lost My Talk*" and what it means to them and their community. The students can hardly believe they're about to create a song and make a video, inspired by the poem.

"They filled up the white board with their ideas. They were so excited," shares Chandra Hildebrand, English teacher at amiskwaciy Academy and the teacher lead on the project. "The students were proud to write their own lyrics. They felt empowered to express their voice."

Rita Joe would be pleased. In her autobiography, the Mi'kmaq poet and songwriter challenges Indigenous youth to find their voices, share their stories and celebrate their talent. *The Rita Joe National Song Project*, funded by caring NAC supporters, gave students in five communities across Canada the chance to do just that.

continued on page 3

**Students of amiskwaciy
Academy performing
their original song
"Nipawik"**
Video still



Message from the National
Arts Centre Foundation CEO

2

Singing the praises of the Young
Artists Program: A young tenor is
grateful for his chance to work with
a legend

4

New funding for NAC production
renewal will benefit artists and
audiences

4

Coffee with a Choreographer gives
young artists a unique glimpse into
the creative process

5

Donor Profile

6

Making Giving Easy

6

Five Minutes with Brian Quirt

7

NAC English Theatre offers
audition coaching to people from
under-represented communities

8

Calendar of Events

8

IN THIS ISSUE

Message from the National Arts Centre Foundation CEO

As the 2015–2016 season comes to a close, I'd like to thank you. It's your thoughtful support that enables us to bring inspiring performance to Canada's stage, invest in fresh, new creation and help grow the talent of young artists by providing them with vital learning opportunities.

Recently we celebrated the end of Alexander Shelley's first season as Music Director for the NAC Orchestra. By all accounts, it was a tremendous success as Alexander brought his own personal style and his commitment to new creation to our beloved Orchestra.

There were a lot of highlights in the season but, like many in the audience, I was especially enthralled by the unique and innovative performances of *Life Reflected: Dear Life, I Lost My Talk, My Name is Amanda Todd* and *Bondarsphere*. As producer and creative director Donna Feore put it, "These aren't just new pieces, they're new everything. It's heart-stopping to see how the NAC Orchestra has invested in these works."

The series has inspired learning opportunities as well. In conjunction with *I Lost My Talk*, the NAC approached five schools from Indigenous communities across the country and invited them to write a song based on the poem by Rita Joe. The results of the *Rita Joe National Song Project* are breathtaking and I invite you to read more about it in our cover story.

We are also celebrating some exciting news from the Government of Canada. Please turn to page 4 to read about new funding for NAC production renewal and how this investment will benefit artists and audiences at the NAC. The growing pains we're experiencing now will be worth it as we move toward a bright, shining future. We're grateful for the support of the Government of Canada.

It's a future you help make possible with your generosity. Your passion and support for the performing arts is the reason we'll always have something new to celebrate on Canada's stage.

With gratitude,



Jayne Watson



Jayne Watson
Photo: Ottawa's Valberg Imaging

Staff Listing

Jayne Watson CEO, National Arts Centre Foundation

Jane Moore Chief Advancement Officer

Annual Giving Staff

Barry M. Bloom Associate Director, Annual Fund and Planned Gifts

Bronwen Dearlove, CFRE Senior Development Officer, Annual Fund and Database

Christina Hunter Cadieux Development Officer

Members of the Board of Directors

NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE FOUNDATION

Gail Asper, O.C., O.M., LL.D. (Winnipeg, MB)

Joe Canavan (Toronto, ON)

Susan Peterson D'Aquino (Ottawa, ON)

Amoryn Engel (Toronto, ON)

Dale Godsoe, C.M. (Halifax, NS)

James Ho (Richmond, BC)

Dianne Kipnes (Edmonton, AB)

D'Arcy Levesque (Calgary, AB)

M. Ann McCaig, C.M., A.O.E., LL.D. (Calgary, AB)

Grant J. McDonald, FCPA, FCA (Ottawa, ON)

Janice O'Born (Toronto, ON)

Karen Prentice, (Calgary, AB)

Alan P. Rossy (Montréal, QC)

J. Serge Sasseville (Montréal, QC)

Barbara Seal, C.M. (Montréal, QC)

C. Scott M. Shepherd (Vancouver, BC)

Eli Taylor (Toronto, ON)

Gary Zed (Ottawa, ON)

Emeritus Directors

L. Grant Burton (Toronto, ON)

Catherine A. (Kiki) Delaney, C.M., LL.D. (Toronto, ON)

Ex-officio Directors

Adrian Burns (Ottawa, ON)

Peter A. Herrndorf, O.C. (Ottawa, ON)

Emeritus Chair

Gail O'Brien (Calgary, AB)



From cover:

Rita Joe National Song Project

empowers Indigenous youth to find their voice and inspire others

"The poem "I Lost My Talk" speaks to the residential school system and the loss of culture and identity and what peaceful reconciliation and next steps forward might look like for a new generation of Indigenous people finding their way in the 21st century," explains Geneviève Cimon, Director, Music Education and Community Engagement at the NAC. "The poem is so resonant. We wanted to use the opportunity to engage with young people on this topic."

The idea for the National Song Project sprang from a visit to the reserve where Rita Joe was born. "We met her daughters and went to the high school and were struck by the creativity, hope and trust among the teachers and students," recalls Geneviève. "I asked them if they could come up with a project that would honour Rita Joe's legacy and inspire other Indigenous youth and communities across Canada. They got back to me and said they'd like to compose a song based on the poem and do a special video shoot."

The NAC approached schools in Cape Breton (Nova Scotia), Norway House (Manitoba), Iqaluit (Nunavut) and Kitigan Zibi (Quebec) as well as in Edmonton (Alberta) – five communities each representing a different Indigenous perspective and experience with residential schools. "We asked each school to recommend a professional singer/songwriter who they'd like to collaborate with as well as a videographer," says Geneviève. "The young people were part of the whole process and learned things they never thought they'd undertake. It was wonderful to hear the songs and the raw emotion coming from teenagers whose imaginations are so ripe."

Chandra agrees it was unforgettable experience for her students. "We showed the video at a school assembly. I told one boy, who is usually very bashful, that he should be proud and his whole face lit up. There was so much positive feedback."

Many of the students, including the youth at amiskwaciy Academy, had the opportunity

to perform their songs for larger audiences.

"We performed at REDx Talks and there were two hundred people in the audience. One girl told me she never dreamed she'd ever get up in front of so many people," says Chandra. "It was a highlight for the students to do something so unique and wide-reaching – to write a song and be in a video that's getting national recognition."

Geneviève hopes the enthusiasm will continue to grow and empower young people. And she hopes you'll watch the videos and share them with your own network and friends. "Please take the time to see the talented creativity you helped lift up and foster," she says.

"These videos are really incredible treasures that will continue living for a long time. Students will be able to show them to their grandchildren. When you believe in people, great things can happen. We couldn't have done it without our supporters."

Visit our website to watch the results of this wonderful project at nac-cna.ca/en/ritajoesong

A standing ovation for the participants involved with the Rita Joe Song Project at the launch of the online music videos in the NAC's Fourth Stage
Photo: Fred Cattroll



I'm so blessed I didn't have to go to a residential school. It's my duty to live the best life I can because I'm not burdened by that.

Student participant in the Rita Joe National Song Project

Singing the praises of the Young Artists Program:

A young tenor is grateful for his chance to work with a legend

Marcel d'Entremont will never forget the email he received last spring.

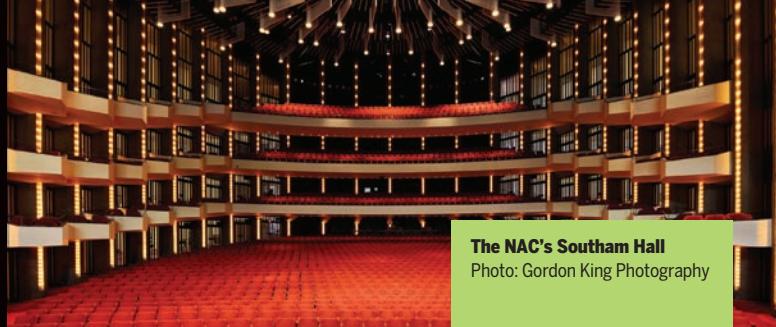
It was from the NAC's *Young Artists Program* committee inviting him to send in the required material if he was interested in attending that summer. Marcel couldn't believe his good luck.

"I had been recommended by a past participant, a tenor, whose girlfriend was a classmate of mine," explains Marcel. "Receiving a spot in a program like the *Young Artists Program* was very exciting. It gave me the rare and thrilling opportunity to perform with a small chamber ensemble as well as with other singers."

But the biggest highlight of Marcel's experience at the *Young Artists Program* was the chance to work with the world-renowned American soprano, Benita Valente. "Benita has been in the singing business for a long time and succeeded at it in so many ways," says Marcel. "She taught me what it takes to be a good singer and be successful in this demanding career. Hopefully I will be able to use her insight to enable myself to follow a similar path."

Marcel will return to the *Young Artists Program* this summer where he will resume his lessons with Benita. He is deeply grateful for the opportunity made possible with donor support. "Words can't fully express my gratitude for your generous donations," he says. "It's always important to get critical feedback from peers and professionals, especially when the professionals are ones like the mentors at the *Young Artists Program*. These experiences are crucial to young musicians and will likely influence many of us for the rest of our lives."

Marcel d'Entremont
performing at last
summer's *Young
Artists Program*
Photo: Fred Cattroll



The NAC's Southam Hall
Photo: Gordon King Photography

New funding for NAC production renewal will benefit artists and audiences

There was a time when the National Arts Centre was at the forefront of technology. We even had the first computerized lighting system in North America. But that was back in 1969 when the NAC was created. Today, our production systems, including lighting, sound and electrical, are decades old and well past their prime.

"The NAC has been updating systems but in a very slow way because of the expense" says Alex Gazalé, Director of Production Renewal at the NAC. "Many parts of the systems have never been upgraded at all."

Thanks to some generous funding that's about to change. Over the next two years, the Government of Canada will invest \$114.9 million in the production renewal of the NAC's performance halls. The new funding will allow the NAC to upgrade production systems, including lighting, sound, projection and electrical in all our performance halls. We will also be able to improve the acoustics in Southam Hall and the isolation of the performance halls from the foyer areas.

"More modern systems will mean we're better able to integrate the needs of the artists," says Alex. "We'll be able to take what the artist wants to do and effortlessly put it into our venues. This will give them more time to prepare and get ready for their performance."

The upgrades to Southam Hall will begin this summer and Alex says new hardwood floors and seating will greatly enhance the performance experience for audiences. "We'll replace the seats which are still the original with more comfortable chairs," he says. "And we'll create two new aisles so the farthest anyone has to go to their seat is much reduced." Improvements to Southam Hall will also include the addition of a cross aisle at the orchestra level that will increase accessibility for people with mobility issues.

The NAC is very grateful to the Government of Canada for their ongoing support. Thanks to this generous investment for production renewal, the performance halls at the NAC will once again be worthy of the many talented artists who grace our stages.





Kidd Pivot/Electric Company Theatre's *Betroffenheit* on stage at the NAC last February
Photo: Wendy D



To meet and network with the artists whose work is celebrated in their time is an incredible opportunity. I'm so grateful to everyone who made it possible.

Amelia Griffin, Dancer and Choreographer

CANADA IS OUR STAGE

Coffee with a Choreographer gives young artists a unique glimpse into the creative process

In February a group of 10 actors, dancers and choreographers walked into the Actor's Quiet Lounge at the NAC and settled into comfortable chairs. They nibbled on cupcakes and did their best to relax. It wasn't easy at first. After all, it's not every day these young artists get the chance to chat over coffee with two internationally renowned contemporary performers.

"Coffee with a Choreographer is a new initiative this year," says Siôned Watkins, Education Associate and Teaching Artist, Dance, at the NAC. "We invited young artists interested in a dance/theatre hybrid to come together in an intimate setting for a glimpse into the creative process of two geniuses in their art form."

Siôned is speaking of Crystal Pite (Kidd Pivot) and Jonathon Young (Electric Company Theatre), who joined forces to create the dance-theatre collaboration, *Betroffenheit*. The artists who attended *Coffee with a Choreographer* also had the opportunity to see the performance at the NAC as part of the experience.

"I've loved Crystal since I began training as a dancer," says one of the participants, Amelia Griffin. "It was a special opportunity to be in the same room with her and Jonathon, ask them questions and learn how they work together."

Amelia describes *Coffee with a Choreographer* as "an open, friendly chat" which gave her a deeper understanding of the creative process. As she says, this is an invaluable experience for promising performers and choreographers at the beginning of their career. "We imagine a career in the arts but it feels so far away," Amelia admits. "The opportunity to meet Crystal and Jonathon was inspiring because we were reminded they were once at square one too."

With help from generous donors like you, Siôned plans to offer the opportunity to more young artists again during the Canada Dance Festival in June. NAC Dance will host three *Coffee with a Choreographer* events – including one for French and one for Indigenous participants.

"Thanks to donor support, we can give young artists the opportunity to be inspired by Canadian, internationally-renowned artists and to assist them going forward with their own creations," says Siôned. "We can give them the chance to live their dreams."



Geoffrey Bruce
Photo: Mark Reynolds

Making Giving Easy:

Your passion for the arts can shine on when you make a gift in your Will

As a generous supporter of the NAC Foundation, the performing arts clearly mean a lot to you. You've made them a part of your life – captivated by the performance you see on our stage, investing in new creation as well as learning opportunities for young artists and future audiences.

Now you have the chance to shape the performing arts in Canada and help ensure future generations can make them a part of their life too.

After first taking care of your loved ones, making a gift in your Will to the NAC Foundation is easy to do. All it takes to make an impact is your own passion and commitment for the arts and some time to determine what type of legacy gift is right for you.

You can leave a specific fixed sum or a percentage of the value of your estate. You can also choose to make what is known as a "residual gift". This type of donation is what's leftover in your estate after all expenses, taxes and your fixed obligations have been met.

Please consult with your professional advisor to help you decide which option is best for you. You can also give the Foundation a call to discuss how you'd like your gift to be used and how you wish to be recognized for your generosity. Your foresight today will give future generations the chance to understand and appreciate why the arts hold such an important place in your life.

*For more information about leaving a gift in your Will, please contact **Barry Bloom at 613 947-7000 ext. 314.***

Donor Profile: A special gift in memory of **Geoffrey F. Bruce**

A loving wife honours her late husband's passion for music

Geoffrey F. Bruce loved all kinds of music – from spirituals to organ music, opera to classical, the Tabernacle Choir to musicals. In fact, it was music that first brought Geoffrey and his wife, Erika, together years ago.

"We met in an elevator in Vienna and struck up a conversation about opera," recalls Erika, who was a cultural affairs correspondent for a German newspaper at the time. "That night was the premiere of a new Rosenkavalier for which I had two tickets. I offered the second one to Geoff."

Back in Ottawa, Geoffrey and Erika had the opportunity to nurture their mutual passion for music when the National Arts Centre opened its doors in 1969. "We were at the opening performances and have been patrons throughout all the years we lived in Ottawa," says Erika. "From the beginning, there was a special bond with the NAC."

Even in his later years, Geoff never lost his passion for music. From the moment he got up in the morning the radio was

turned on to classical music. And, Geoffrey never lost his desire to attend live performances at the NAC, even after his health declined. "Over the last two years of his life, Geoffrey had to use a wheelchair, and I will be forever grateful to the staff at the NAC for assisting me and him so ably," says Erika.

To recognize and honour Geoffrey's lifelong love of music, Erika recently made a generous gift to the NAC Foundation in his memory. "The NAC made such a difference in our lives. Making this donation was the most natural thing to do," Erika explains.

In return for Erika's generosity, the NAC Orchestra is proud to dedicate a concert to the man who was such a loyal patron over the years. "It would have meant so much to Geoffrey to know a concert has been dedicated to his memory – for the NAC to show this level of recognition," says Erika. "We benefitted so much from the performances we saw there. Attending the NAC has been a highlight for both of us."



Five Minutes with Brian Quirt:

A Q&A with the Artistic Director of Nightswimming about 5x25, a project funded by English Theatre's *The Collaborations*

In 1995, Brian Quirt founded Toronto-based Company, Nightswimming to create, commission and develop new works of theatre, music and dance. In 2015, Nightswimming launched a 5-year project to commission five new works by performance creators born in 1995. The project, 5x25, will receive support from English Theatre's *The Collaborations*. We asked Brian to explain more about his innovative project and what the NAC's support means to him.

Q: Can you describe your project *5x25*?

A: It's basic idea is to commission one project each year for the next five years by Canadian artists who were born in 1995, which is the year of Nightswimming's first production. It's a way of celebrating and marking our 20th anniversary all the way to our 25th anniversary.

Q: How did you feel when you learned *5x25* had been selected to receive funding from the NAC's English Theatre *The Collaborations*?

A: Capital D Delighted would be the word. The support from a national institution like the NAC is critical in terms of expanding the profile and enhancing the national reputation of this project. Having the NAC behind it makes a big difference as we move forward over the next couple of years.

Q: How will the funding benefit promising new artists?

A: *The Collaborations* funding boosts what we're able to offer the artist – which is not only a commission but also support for readings or workshops over the course of the next year. The funding will increase our ability to offer some studio time for the artist, vital to the work of any young artist exploring how to make performances.

Q: Why is it so important to support opportunities for new creation in Canada?

A: The substantial support the NAC devotes to new work is essential, particularly as our country is shifting and diversifying. There are a whole host of voices that are either new to Canada or have been excluded in the past; supporting those artists is critical to ensuring those stories reach our stages.

Q: What message would you like to send to NAC supporters who help make opportunities like *The Collaborations* possible for artists like yourself?

A: A program like *The Collaborations* is spectacularly important because it enables artists who might not otherwise get support from an organization of the scale of the NAC to have a relationship with the Centre. Supporting that breadth of contact and opportunity through your donations to the NAC will have a long term and substantial ripple effect.



Brian Quirt

Photo: Erin Brubacher

NAC English Theatre offers audition coaching to people from under-represented communities

Jillian Keiley, Artistic Director for English Theatre at the NAC, and her colleagues across the country notice it every time they cast a play.

"Outside Canada's major centres, there are very few people who audition who aren't white," she says. "We need to increase the different voices we hear on Canadian stages to reflect the full diversity of Canadian society."

As a step towards this goal, the NAC recently offered free individual coaching sessions for students planning to audition

for post-secondary theatre training who self-identify as members of under-represented communities. Applicants were asked to submit a statement outlining their career aspirations and how they self-identify.

"Most of the applicants we heard from are just finishing high school," explains Judi Pearl, Artistic Projects Coordinator for English Theatre. "I was so moved by their stories about identity and representation."

Once selected, each student was paired with a professional actor for two, hour-long sessions via Skype or Facetime.

"What we have at the NAC is access to thousands of great artists so we can match the student with the right mentor for them," says Jillian. "The goal is to help the students get audition-ready so they can get into theatre schools, impress everybody, get on stage and tell their story."

Jillian and Judi say the sessions have been very productive and are delighted to report two early successes. One student has been accepted into a prestigious theatre school in Vancouver, and another has been cast in a professional co-production between two major regional theatres.

They also hope the program will grow. "This is one way we can help level the playing field and make room for the stories that actually make up our Canada," says Jillian. "Diversity is our strength. We have to broaden our story-telling."

Everyone at English Theatre is grateful to NAC supporters for your role in making this program possible. "Thank you for helping shine the light on these gifted underrepresented talents."



Adventures of a Black Girl in Search of God,
on stage at the NAC
last October
Photo: Andrée Lanthier

A special thank you to our Open Rehearsal and Preview sponsor, Rob Marland, Royal LePage Performance Realty.

Calendar of Events

DATE AND TIME	EVENT/ SPECIAL INFORMATION	INVITATION ONLY	PRODUCERS	DIRECTORS	MAESTROS	PLAYWRIGHTS	BENEFACTORS	SUSTAINERS	ASSOCIATES
September 13-15, 2016	Attend the Stratford Festival with the Friends of English Theatre, make your own selection of shows.*		●	●	●	●	●	●	●

* Friends of English Theatre is an independent membership driven group that supports English Theatre at the National Arts Centre. For further information call 613 726-9330 or email: franny@pearl01.ca