

FALL 2009

Full Circle



40 years old and going strong The NAC celebrates a milestone birthday

Prima ballerina Veronica Tennant remembers being nervous that rainy and windswept night.

It was June 2, 1969 and Veronica was about to take part in a history-making event. With the eyes of the world upon her, she took to the stage with the National Ballet of Canada for the opening night performance at the National Arts Centre. But Veronica needn't have worried – both the ballet and the brand new NAC received a very warm reception. She distinctly remembers the standing ovations that night. “The place was packed, just sizzling with excitement. Then the next night we did *Romeo and Juliet*, which again brought down the house,” says Veronica.

Forty years later, the NAC has grown into a world-renowned performing arts centre with both emerging and respected artists from across Canada and around the globe gracing its stages. It is a history worth celebrating and that's just what we did on June 2, 2009 with a special performance that highlighted English and French theatre, dance, and music. To say the evening, co-hosted by Veronica Tennant and Quebec playwright Michel Marc Bouchard, received a warm reception would be an understatement.

“The opening of the National Arts Centre is an exciting event for Ottawa and for Canada . . . Its possibilities are unlimited.”

— Pierre Elliott Trudeau, June 1969

On this unforgettable night, the audience, including dignitaries from the worlds of politics, the arts, and business, were transported back in time to the NAC's opening week.

Romeo and Juliet was featured prominently throughout the celebration with Pinchas Zukerman leading the NAC Orchestra in a rendition of Tchaikovsky's *Overture to Romeo and Juliet*; the National Ballet of Canada dancers Chan Hon Goh and Zdenek Konvalina performing the famous balcony scene; and Quebec actors Steve Gagnon and Alexandrine Warren showcasing some of the most memorable scenes from the theatre adaptation of *Roméo et Juliette*. In keeping with the NAC's mission to make the performing arts accessible to every person, tickets for the evening were free and distributed through lotteries for NAC donors, subscribers, and the general public.

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NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE
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message

from the
National Arts Centre Foundation Chair

Over the past 40 years, the National Arts Centre has prided itself on developing and celebrating the very best artistic talent the country has to offer. Our stages have featured everyone from Canadian icons and international superstars, to youth choirs and community musicians.

As we mark our 40th anniversary at the NAC, I'm pleased to welcome you to our new performance season. Thanks to your valued support, we're commemorating the NAC's role as a vibrant hub of performance, creation, and learning, and celebrating its future with exciting new programming.

This season's incredible line-up is full of must-see performances. From the highly acclaimed *Drowsy Chaperone* and the premiere of the Boston Ballet at the NAC to the unique pairing of the NAC Orchestra with the Orchestre Métropolitain du Grand Montréal, I'm sure you'll find many unforgettable experiences.

We're also celebrating the appointment of Jayne Watson as the NAC Foundation's new CEO and Executive Director. I know she is looking forward to meeting you and all our other donors. As you may be aware, Jayne has been with the NAC since 2001, serving as the Director of Communications and Public Affairs.

Jayne brings a wealth of experience to the Foundation, thanks to more than 20 years as a senior executive, political advisor, and consultant. She has previously served as the Director of Communications at Export Development Canada, and held senior communications roles in the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons and Canada Post Corporation.

In 2007, Jayne co-chaired the NAC's strategic planning process and helped write "*Performing for Canadians*," the NAC's 2008-2013 strategic plan. She also coordinated a major fundraising campaign for the 2009 Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Gala, raising a record amount from donors and sponsors. With this solid track record, I know Jayne's energy, enthusiasm, and outstanding leadership abilities will ensure a strong future for the NAC Foundation.

This issue of *Full Circle* is also a celebration of your loyalty and generosity to the NAC, which has helped us face tough economic challenges. Whether it's through youth and education activities, artistic innovation, or the creation of new works, the inspirational stories in these pages demonstrate how your support is helping shape the future of the performing arts in Canada.

Thanks to you, we have much to celebrate at the NAC during this 40th anniversary season. I hope you will join us as we fondly remember our past and use this strong foundation to build a bright future together.



Gail O'Brien
Chair, NAC Foundation

NAC Foundation

Jayne Watson
CEO, National Arts Centre

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Sound Travels Canada

Immersing students in the joy of music

The Grade 4 student struggles to play his shiny new recorder. His teacher casts a worried glance in his direction. She knows this young boy isn't as confident as some of his classmates and that he's getting frustrated. Suddenly, after trying and trying, he "gets it." Elizabeth Simpson, NAC Orchestra French Horn Player and teaching musician, has been working with the students and takes a few moments to praise the boy. "Liz instinctively knew that this student needed immediate positive feedback," recalls Grade 4 teacher, Sandy Labonte. "He grew several inches taller as he sat up straight and proud."

Stories like this one – of professional musicians and students working together to make music, of a young boy experiencing the thrill of "getting it" – are at the heart of the Sound Travels Canada program, now in its third year.

Sound Travels Canada is a special five-week program for Grades 4 and 5 students at

Hawthorne Public School. Seventy percent of the students at Hawthorne come from families living below the poverty line. Most cannot afford extracurricular lessons or classes in the arts for their children. That's where the NAC comes in. Liz, along with NAC Dance Outreach Coordinator Renata Soutter, works directly with the students and teachers, helping to effectively incorporate the arts into the classroom.

"All children need a rich learning environment full of music, drama, athletics, and art that will stimulate their senses and inspire them to meet challenges," says Francesse Kopezewski, Principal at Hawthorne School. "This program gives our students, the majority of who could not afford such intensive music lessons, an opportunity to work with knowledgeable, talented musicians. They give our students not only the lessons, but the attention and patience needed to move ahead."



Photo: Michel Dozois

Each year, after five weeks of learning the recorder and other rhythm instruments and exploring the creative link between movement and storytelling, the children are ready to showcase their hard work and talent in a very special concert at Hawthorne School. It's a thrilling evening for the students, their teachers, and their parents.

"I think we all share a special moment on concert night where we remember why it is we do what we do," admits Geneviève Cimon, Associate Director of Music Education at the NAC. "The students are so inspiring – so engaged – and so immersed in the joy of music."

Much Ado about Jayne Watson, the Foundation's New CEO

As the curtain rises on our new CEO's first season with the NAC Foundation, we'd like to help you get to know her a bit better. Here's the backstage scoop about her favourite cause, pet peeve, and which great performances she's looking forward to this year.

History

- **Education:** Graduate of Queen's University (Kingston, Ontario), with Bachelor of Arts degree and Master's in Public Administration
- **Family:** Mom of two girls
- **Hometown:** Lachute, Québec
- **Residence:** Ottawa
- **Favourite hobby:** Tennis and cooking – I've been known to lob ingredients into bowls!
- **First job:** Auditor



Photo: Michel Dozois

- **Best fundraising advice:** Listen more than you talk.

- **Personal hero:** Terry Fox
- **How do you motivate people to give?:** Remind them how good it feels to help a cause you believe in.

- **Word that best describes you:** Upbeat

- **Pet peeve:** Clutter on any surface
- **Guilty pleasure:** Pedicures
- **Most unique office décor:** Art by my children
- **Favourite NAC moment:** When our wonderful NAC Orchestra plays "O'Canada" before the Gala or while on tour – goosebumps!
- **NAC show you're most excited about this season:** A tie: English Theatre's *The Drowsy Chaperone* and French Theatre's *Blackbird* – two plays that couldn't be more different, but both are powerful examples of the live theatre experience. I've seen both before and am really excited to see them on our stages!

Insights

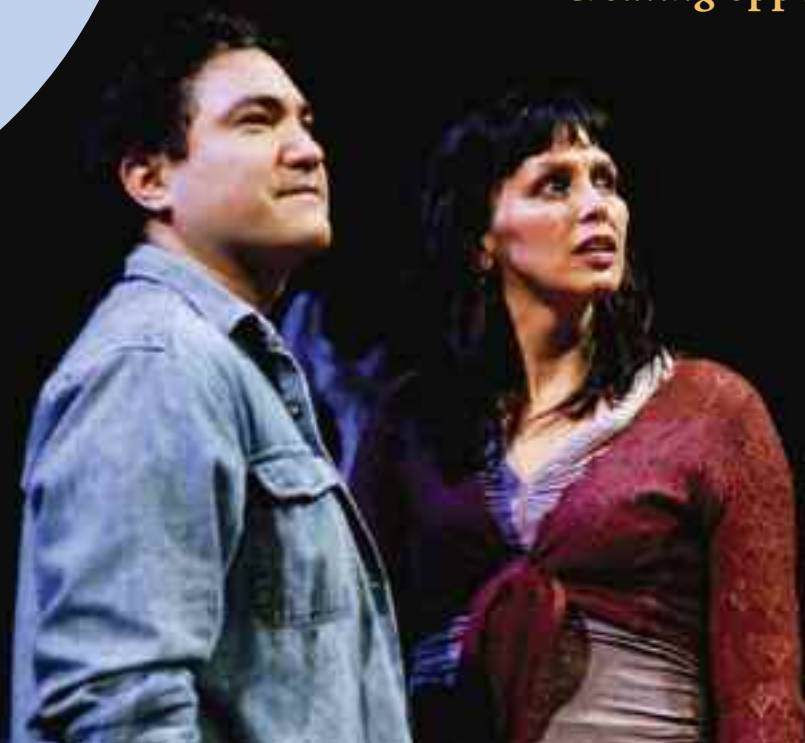
- **Favourite cause:** Supporting the arts, of course!

Confessions

- **What keeps you up at night?:** My teenage daughters!

Playwrights in Residence

Creating opportunities for Aboriginal artists



Kevin Loring, one of NAC English Theatre's Playwright's in Residence this season, performs with actor Lisa C. Ravensbergen in *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* at the National Arts Centre this past spring. Photo: Barbara Zimonick

Playwright Kevin Loring remembers it as a euphoric moment.

He was at the National Arts Centre, taking part in English Theatre's The Ark workshop, when Peter Hinton, Artistic Director of English Theatre, and Paula Danckert, Company Dramaturg and Artistic Associate, brought him into a room off to the side. "They invited me to serve as Playwright in Residence for the 2009-2010 season," recalls Kevin. "And then, as if that wasn't enough, they told me they wanted to bring my play, *Where the Blood Mixes*, to the NAC. I couldn't believe it."

It's really not so hard to believe when you consider Kevin's enormous talent and vision. *Where the Blood Mixes*, his debut play, was nominated for a Dora award and won second prize in the Canada-wide Herman Voaden National Playwriting Competition. It's the story of loss and redemption set during the salmon run where the Fraser and Thompson Rivers meet.

"It's the one thing I've created that feels like it's done," admits Kevin. "I'm really proud and elated that it will be performed at the NAC. This is Canada's premiere theatre. It puts you in a national context."

Kevin is also grateful for the opportunity to join the NAC as Playwright in Residence – an annual program that invites two playwrights of Aboriginal or culturally diverse background to participate in various projects while they work on their own

creations. As Kevin explains, the program breeds new and exciting work and gives playwrights the chance to create and excel at what they do. "This opportunity is like gold," he says. "It gives me the space and time to create while exposing me to all the resources of the NAC. It gives me the extra boost I wouldn't have on my own."

Over 10 weeks, Kevin will complete a first draft of his new play and there's every reason to believe that it will be just as successful and relevant as *Where the Blood Mixes*. "These are Canadian stories. Native theatre is Canadian theatre that opens up another point of view we often don't get to see in the mainstream," says Kevin. "The NAC acknowledges that Aboriginal culture is the third founding culture of this country. It has a true national voice. It says what this country is, where we've come from, and where we can go."

Of course, none of this creativity could exist without the generosity of our supporters. "You fund the new work of our country," agrees Kevin, who has also performed in numerous plays across Canada, including playing roles in *Copper Thunderbird* and *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* at the NAC. "By investing in new and exciting work, you help bring stories into the world in a very real way."

Where the Blood Mixes appears on our Studio Stage from March 23 to April 3, 2010.

The NAC Shares the Spirit

this holiday season

Something magical will happen at the National Arts Centre this festive season. Soon its theatres will come alive with special holiday programming from all three disciplines – music, dance, and theatre. Patrons of all ages will delight as favourites such as *The Nutcracker*, *A Leahy Family Christmas with the NAC Orchestra*, Handel's *Messiah*, and Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* will fill the Centre with holiday wonder.

But attending a holiday-themed performance at the NAC isn't possible for many deserving children and their families. They won't have the opportunity to feel what it's like to put on their best outfit, stand in our brightly lit lobby, and feel a rush of anticipation as the house lights dim.

The NAC Foundation is determined to change that this holiday season. We believe every child deserves an experience like this one and we've made it our goal through *Share the Spirit* to reach as many children and families in need as possible. With the help of our partners and caring supporters like you, we're distributing complimentary tickets to high-demand, holiday performances and open rehearsals. And, for those children who are physically unable to come to the NAC, we're literally bringing the performing arts to them.

"*Share the Spirit* was born when we asked the question, 'What do we have that we can share?'" explains Shelley Levoy, NAC Associate Development Officer. "How can we give others an experience they may not otherwise have?"

It didn't take long for the concept to win enthusiastic support from sponsors and NAC donors alike. It seems that everyone wants to be part of this magical opportunity. "This is an initiative that's been popular from the beginning," says Shelley. "Most people are willing to help. Every department we've approached has come on-board."



Musicians *share the spirit* during the holiday season. Photo: Fred Cattroll



NAC File Photo


To reach as many children as possible, the Foundation will work with key non-profit organizations in the Ottawa region, including CHEO, the Sens Foundation, the Candlelighters, and the NAC Orchestra Players Association, to bring families in need to the NAC, and the performing arts to the children. Musicians will travel to places like Roger's House, which provides pediatric palliative care to its young residents, and brighten lives through the magic of performance.

With the special holiday programming and hundreds of eager, young faces reflecting all the joy of the season, Shelley can't wait for the magic to begin. "Something happens when the audience is new to the NAC. There's a special energy in the building," she says. "Supporters have a very important part to play in that. *Share the Spirit* wouldn't be happening if we didn't have their support to count on."

Making “the scene”

After 40 years, English Theatre welcomes home *Rita Joe*

Kevin Loring, August Schellenberg, Lisa C. Ravensbergen perform in *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* at the National Arts Centre this past spring. Photo: Barbara Zimonick



It was the first play ever performed in the brand new National Arts Centre Theatre in 1969. And it was a runaway winner – shining the spotlight on Canadian theatre like never before. August Schellenberg took on the role of young Jaimie Paul in *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe*, while Chief Dan George played the role of David Joe. They were the only two Aboriginal cast members in a production that focused on First Nations issues and its people.

This spring, in celebration of *BC Scene* and the NAC’s 40th anniversary, *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* returned to our stage. And with it came the return of August himself, this time playing the part of the older David Joe. In this all-Aboriginal production, Kevin Loring was cast as Jaimie Paul and he can’t say enough about his co-star. “It was amazing to see a man in his 70s so solid,” says Kevin of August. “I was genuinely inspired.”

With Yvette Nolan at the helm, this performance also marked another important milestone. “It was the first time there was a native director on the main stage,” explains Kevin. “It was big deal and I felt very honoured to be part of it. There was a lot of love in the room and we had so much fun during the whole run.”

40 years old and going strong

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The celebration was a great success and a fitting tribute to the NAC and the vision of its founder, Hamilton Southam, who championed the centre’s beginnings 40 years ago. During his 10-year tenure as its first Director General, the NAC became known as a centre of creativity – a reputation we work hard to uphold to this day with help from generous supporters like you.

Hamilton Southam would be proud of what the NAC has become, says NAC president Peter Herrndorf. “There’s a kind of creative ferment here that goes on all the time. My colleagues and I spend a lot of time imagining what the performing arts could be like in 10 years in this country, what the NAC could be like.”

Among the big plans for the NAC in the near future is *Prairie Scene*, a vibrant festival that will showcase artists from Manitoba and Saskatchewan here in Ottawa during the spring of 2011; and the development of an English Theatre

National Young Company, a unique program that gives emerging Canadian theatre professionals the opportunity to experience true apprenticeship in theatre performance.

Some of these ambitious plans are contingent on receiving the support of individual donors especially now at a time when we are facing challenging economic times. In fact, the role of the NAC Foundation, established nine years ago, and the loyal commitment of its supporters has never been more critical. “What we’re hoping, and arts organizations across the country are hoping, is that individuals will fill the gap,” adds Peter.

Today, 40 years after a young ballerina danced across the stage on a rainy June evening, the NAC has lived up to the hopes and dreams of countless Canadians. For artists, creators, visionaries, and audiences, it continues to be a place of unlimited possibilities – thanks to friends like you.

Donor Profile:

Sarah Jennings Meeting the Challenge

"Like many others in Ottawa, my husband, Ian Johns, and I threw ourselves behind the arts centre. It was understood that to survive the NAC would have to get into the private fundraising business and we wanted the NAC to succeed." Photo: Mike Pinder



Sarah Jennings, respected journalist, lecturer, and author, became a financial supporter of the NAC in response to an intriguing challenge.

In the late 1990s, the NAC was going through some turbulent times and in urgent need of financial support. Toronto financier Grant Burton heard the call for help. He offered to donate \$400,000 if the NAC could match the gift within six weeks. Just a few days later, the Challenge Fund was launched.

"Like many others in Ottawa, my husband, Ian Johns, and I threw ourselves behind the arts centre," Sarah recalls. "It was understood that to survive the NAC would have to get into the private fundraising business and we wanted the NAC to succeed."

From that day on Sarah has never looked back. She continues to make gifts to the NAC Foundation – generously supporting the performing arts she loves. "My interest came from a lifetime of exposure to the arts," explains Sarah. "As a small child growing up in Toronto our house was always full of artists."

Sarah may be a devoted supporter, but she is also dedicated reporter. For years

she followed the NAC as a political cultural journalist in Ottawa. She knows all about the importance of telling the true story. And so, when NAC chair, Dr. David Leighton, suggested Sarah write a book detailing the history of the NAC, she agreed, but only if she was given a free-hand in the telling.

Four years of painstaking research followed. Sarah says she spoke with "more than 150 artists, politicians, officials, administrators and other participants who enthusiastically gave their time, memories, and reflections. Everyone wanted to tell me their story. Many have carried the information inside them for years. They told me nobody had ever asked them, 'What really happened on your watch?'"

In addition to the interviews, Sarah often visited the NAC after hours and during holidays, sorting through boxes and boxes of press clippings and other NAC records. "It was a tremendous amount of work," she admits. "I had no idea how enormous it would be."

But it was worth it. Published last spring, *Art and Politics: The History of the National Arts*

Centre is an honest and captivating telling of the creation and first four decades of the NAC. Divided into three parts, the book details the beginnings and early growth of the NAC; the turbulent middle years; and its renaissance of recent years – when the decision was made to restore and recast the organization to provide continuing benefit to the performing arts in Ottawa and across the country.

"I hope readers will learn what a remarkable institution the NAC is and how it's important to them as Canadians," says Sarah. "For supporters, the book gives them the inside story of the place they love."

It's a love Sarah knows well and she remains a staunch supporter of the NAC and the performing arts in Canada. "The performing arts are an essential ingredient to our way of life. They need and deserve to be supported," she says. "The absence of the arts is the absence of civilization."

Art and Politics: The History of the National Arts Centre is available for purchase at your local bookstore and online at www.chapters.indigo.ca.

Ask the Expert: Remembering the NAC in your Will

Making or revisiting your will after there has been a change in your life can be a powerful thing.

Drafting a will gives you pause for reflection, to think about what's important to you. It is a wonderful opportunity to recognize your life's passions – your family, friends, and the charities that hold a special place in your heart.

For that reason, I encourage you to consider leaving a bequest for the National Arts Centre Foundation. Of course, there are many financial benefits for you and your heirs. For example, you can leave a gift of securities,

bonds, or stocks and avoid paying capital gains taxes. You can even add a codicil to your will and direct your executor to donate the listed securities directly to the NACF.







But the biggest benefits aren't necessarily financial. By remembering the NAC in your will, you help shape the future of the performing arts in Canada. You share your passion for the arts with future generations, including your own descendants.

We all want to take care of our family and making a will gives us the chance to do so

well into the future. That's why, before you make a bequest to charity, it's a good idea to involve your children in the discussion. Most of our donors find their children are very supportive of their decision and share their generosity, values, and desire to make a difference in the world – *in this lifetime and beyond*.

To discuss leaving a bequest for the NAC in your will, please contact Barry Bloom at 613-947-7000 ext. 314.

Calendar of Events

DATE & TIME	EVENT/SPECIAL INFORMATION	INVITATION ONLY	PRODUCERS	DIRECTORS	MAESTROS	PLAYWRIGHTS	BENEFACTORS	SUSTAINERS	ASSOCIATES
October 24, 2009 7:30 p.m. Dominion-Chalmers United Church	The Ark: The Theatre of Ancient Greece Tickets on sale through the Box Office								
November 5, 2009 1:15 p.m. Southam Hall	Donor Open Rehearsal — Dance: <i>The Sleeping Beauty</i> , The National Ballet of Canada								
November 8, 2009 Montreal	Friends of English Theatre Attend three plays with the Friends of English Theatre*								
November 10, 2009 6:45 p.m. Theatre	Donor Preview — French Theatre: <i>Hedda Gabler</i>								
November 18, 2009 9:15 a.m. Southam Hall	Donor Open Rehearsal — NACO: <i>Sacred Trees</i>								
January 12, 2010 6:45 p.m. Theatre	Donor Preview — English Theatre: <i>Mother Courage</i>								
January 28, 2010 12:45 p.m. Southam Hall	Donor Open Rehearsal — Dance: Mixed repertoire, Boston Ballet								
February 9, 2010 6:45 p.m. Southam Hall	Donor Open Rehearsal — NACO: <i>Beethoven's Missa Solemnis</i>								

* For more information call 613-726-9330 or email franny@magma.ca.

Five minutes with Michael Blackie

A Q&A with the Executive Chef for the National Arts Centre

Since his arrival on March 9, 2009, Michael Blackie, the National Arts Centre's new Executive Chef, has been busy. Creating new menus and bringing his creations on-line are all in a day's work.

We caught up with him recently to get a "taste" of who he is.

Q: When did you know you had a passion for cooking?

A: When I was 10, I did some cooking at a French Immersion camp. But it wasn't a straight path. At 20, I was working at a dog kennel when my mom, Edith, sat me down and said, "It's time to get serious." She reminded me that I always come back to the kitchen. That's when I started studying.



Q: Other than food, what is your passion?

A: I love mucking around with computers. In fact, we're just about to launch something on the NAC website which features short videos of our dishes. Guests can compare their experiences with what we present. It will be a first in the industry.

(Check out this new feature at www.lecafe.ca)

Q: What are you focusing on right now?

A: Simplicity. People are looking for grassroots dishes – it's food that stays in the memory.

Q: Are you the cook in your house?

A: No. I don't bring my work home. My wife (Jillian) and I figured that out early.

Q: Tell us two things that few people know about you?

A: I played violin for eight years, but I couldn't read music. My mother told me I'd regret quitting and she was right. And, I speak Spanish. We lived in Mexico. In fact, my kids were born there.

Q: What's the best thing about being at the National Arts Centre?

A: It's having the freedom to show the national capital and beyond who Michael Blackie is and what he wants his team to be. It's not just about the food. It's about the experience.

We invite you, our donors, to sample Michael Blackie's culinary offerings, including his new "munch" menu, which features lighter fare offered weekdays from 2 to 4:30 p.m. and on performance evenings (Southam Hall) from 9 to 10:30 p.m. We look forward to welcoming you to Le Café on your next visit to the NAC.

For further information, please contact:

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