



For Immediate Release: August 16, 2011

## **Finalists Announced for 2011 Toronto Arts Foundation Awards**

Today, Toronto Arts Foundation (TAF) announced the fifteen finalists for the 2011 Toronto Arts Foundation Awards, celebrating those individuals and organizations who have made outstanding contributions to Toronto's vibrant artistic and cultural life. This year's nominees were chosen by a stellar multi-disciplinary jury which included Peter Chin, Simon Foster, Maureen Hynes, Shannon Litzenberger, Charles Reeve, Sonia Sakamoto-Jog, Jini Stolk, Jordan Tannahill and Jennifer Waring. Winners of the **2011 Toronto Arts Foundation Awards** will be announced on **Thursday, October 20, 2011** at the Mayor's Arts Awards Lunch.

### **2011 Toronto Arts Foundation Awards Finalists**

#### Arts for Youth Award finalists:

**Canadian Children's Dance Theatre, Theatre Direct, and Young People's Theatre**

This \$15,000 cash prize established in 2007 by Martha Burns, Jim Fleck and Jim Pitblado, celebrates an individual, collective or organization that has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to engaging Toronto youth in the arts. The two finalists will receive \$2,000, made possible by Diana Bennett and Spencer Lanthier.

#### Toronto Arts and Business Award finalists:

**The Drake Hotel, Roberto Martella, and TD Bank Group**

This award celebrates a local business that has made an important contribution to the arts in Toronto through innovative, transformative and entrepreneurial partnerships. Established in 2006, this award is presented in partnership with The Globe and Mail, Business for the Arts and the Toronto Arts Foundation. The recipient of this award receives a work of art and will be recognized for its achievement in the Report on Business section of The Globe and Mail.

-more-

RBC Emerging Artist Award finalists:

**Adam Garnet Jones, Reza Jacobs, and Donna-Michelle St. Bernard**

This \$7,500 cash prize is presented to an emerging Toronto artist working in the new media or performing arts discipline in celebration of current accomplishments and future potential. In addition, finalists will receive \$1,000 each. Established in 2006 by RBC Foundation, this award is intended to support the development or completion of new work.

Muriel Sherrin Award for International Achievement in Music finalists:

**Andrew Burashko, Rita Chiarelli, and Trichy Sankaran**

A \$10,000 cash prize presented to an artist or creator who has made a contribution to the cultural life of Toronto through outstanding achievement in music. The recipient will also have participated in international initiatives, including touring, studying abroad and participating in artist exchanges.

Rita Davies and Margo Bindhardt Cultural Leadership Award finalists:

**Sudha Khandwani, Jane Marsland, and Don Oravec**

This \$10,000 cash prize co-sponsored by the family of Margo Bindhardt and Toronto Arts Foundation is presented biennially to an individual who has demonstrated creative cultural leadership in the development of arts and culture in Toronto.

In addition, each award winner will receive an original work of art commissioned by the Toronto Arts Foundation. This year TAF has chosen **Katie Bethune-Leamen**, a contemporary artist living and working in Toronto, to create the piece. Also new this year, each finalist will be photographed as part of the Finalists Portrait Series. These beautiful stills will be shot by Denise Grant Photography, and will be featured online, courtesy of NOW Magazine.

*Toronto Arts Foundation exists to provide the creative opportunity for donors to support the arts in Toronto. TAF believes that a great city demands great art, and by supporting, celebrating, financing and advocating for Toronto's local artists, we're improving the quality of life of all Torontonians. Although separate entities, the Toronto Arts Council and Toronto Arts Foundation benefit by being run as sister organizations, ensuring close contact with the arts sector in Toronto and an ongoing awareness of activities and needs throughout the community. For more information on the awards and the work of the Toronto Arts Foundation, please visit [www.torontoarts.org/awards.html](http://www.torontoarts.org/awards.html).*

**Finalists' biographies attached.**

Media Contact:

Karen Lorenowicz, KL Strategic Communications, 416-243-0168, [karen.l@sympatico.ca](mailto:karen.l@sympatico.ca)

## 2011 Toronto Arts Foundation Awards Finalists' Biographies

**Andrew Burashko** made his debut at the age of seventeen with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and has since established himself as one of the most sought-after soloists in Canada. Andrew founded the Art of Time Ensemble, a chamber music society comprised of the best musicians on the Canadian scene. Since 1998, Art of Time Ensemble has been committed to building a new and younger audience for classical music. The ensemble has received wide acclaim for its thoughtful and challenging programming, its brilliant performances, and its ability to reach across the borders that often separate artistic genres and audiences.

**Canadian Children's Dance Theatre** is a Toronto repertory company founded by Artistic Director Deborah Lundmark and Managing Director Michael deConinck Smith in 1980 to present gifted next-generation artists in professional productions. Since 2000, CCDT has conducted over one hundred Ontario Community Residencies engaging 160,000 students and teachers with mainstage performances expressly crafted for young audiences. Other presentation highlights include an appearance at Toronto's Princess of Wales Theatre for the Creative Trust Gala, tours to Singapore, Malaysia and China, two appearances at Dancers for Life and five invitations to the Canada Dance Festival in Ottawa.

**Rita Chiarelli** is Canada's most highly acclaimed female root and blues artist. With a JUNO award and 4 subsequent JUNO nominations, she is known across Canada as the "Goddess of the Blues". Chiarelli is a gifted songwriter and an entertaining performer, with a soaring three octave voice that sets her apart from her peers. Over the past five years she has released *Cuore*, a recording of traditional Italian folk songs, which won the World music category at the prestigious Canadian Folk Music Awards; *Uptown Goes Downtown Tonight*, a collaboration with the Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra, and the award-winning documentary *Music From the Big House*. Over the past decade she has won every major Canadian blues award including multiple Mapleblues awards, CBC's Great Canadian Blues Award, and Toronto Independent Music Awards.

**The Drake Hotel** is a cultural, entertainment and hospitality landmark in Toronto. In the seven years since its opening, Drake has come to be known as an energetic hub for visual and performance art as well as dining and hospitality, thus providing one of Canada's most unique and sought after hotel and culinary experiences. It is clearly more than a place to eat and sleep: it is a hotbed for culture.

**Reza Jacobs** was born in Pakistan and raised in Kuwait. He was educated in Vancouver and New York, and now lives in Toronto. He embraces the entire music spectrum of accompaniment, arrangement (both vocal and instrumental), music direction, sound design, pure composition, and writing for music theatre (both score and lyric). He has worked with some of the most established theatre practitioners in Canada both as an interpreter and creator, and is considered one of the most generous and inspiring collaborators in the arts community. Reza has recently begun a new project, *The Perpetual Tourist*, a unique and innovative piece that combines texted story with original compositions that serve as narrative (but without lyrics).

**Adam Garnet Jones** is a young Aboriginal (Cree/Metis) director and filmmaker. A graduate of Ryerson University's film program, his short films include *Cloudbreaker* and *A Small Thing*, both chosen for screening at the Toronto International Film Festival. Adam has served on the board of the *imagineNATIVE* film festival, and from 2005-2007 coordinated 7<sup>th</sup> Generation Image Makers, a program geared towards at-risk inner-city youth. In 2007 he received a rare honour when the Canadian House of Commons screened *Cloudbreaker* on Parliament Hill to mark the U.N. Day for

the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. He has worked as a film programmer for the Inside Out film festival and was appointed to the Ontario Film Review Board in 2009.

**Sudha Khandwani** is North America's first and only presenter of international festivals and symposia of Indian dance and has consistently, for the past twenty years, brought to Toronto a wide variety of classical and contemporary works from around the world and Canada. She is the founder and Artistic Director of Kalanidhi Fine Arts of Canada. She also served for a few years on the Boards of Directors of the National Ballet School, CanAsian Dance Festival and Rasik Arts, and was the co-founder of Ababeel Film Society of Toronto. She is a versatile artist whose deep involvement in the fields of Indian dance, theatre, acting, choreography, photography and film span a period of 60 years.

**Jane Marsland** is an articulate advocate for the arts and has served on a wide range of boards, advisory groups and committees for many years. Jane was co-founder and director of *ARTS 4 CHANGE*, a three-year program designed to create positive change for and by arts professionals in Toronto, as well as co-founder and Director of Technical Assistance of the Creative Trust: Working Capital for the Arts. Ms. Marsland has managed arts organizations since 1970 and was General Manager of the Danny Grossman Dance Company from 1982 to 1999. Since 1999, Jane has been working as a freelance arts consultant and has worked with more than 90 arts organizations. She has been the recipient of two arts community awards: a "Harold" in 2001 and the Sandra Tulloch Award for Innovation in the Arts in 2002. In 1995, she received the first M. Joan Chalmers Award for Arts Administration for outstanding leadership in the arts.

**Roberto Martella** has owned and operated grano for the past 25 years with his wife Lucia. They continue to live upstairs where they have raised four children – Bianca, Luca, Dante and Simona. Roberto's board involvement with cultural groups includes the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the Canadian Opera Company, the National Arts Centre, Villa Charities, and Luminato. All manner of socio-cultural organizations continue to be welcomed to use grano to stage events and fundraisers.

**Don Oravec** has worked in the cultural sector for over 25 years, first at the Toronto Symphony Orchestra in marketing, customer service, and development, then at Tafelmusik, Canada's Baroque Orchestra as their first full-time director of development. While at Tafelmusik Don helped the organization establish a \$1M endowment and increased their corporate and individual donors. Don had the adventure of a lifetime – in 1989 he 'retired', packed his bags and moved to Monserrat in the West Indies. He survived Hurricane Hugo, a category five storm, and returned to Toronto. He has served as Executive Director of the Writers' Trust of Canada since 2003, and under his tenure, the organization has developed into one of the leading players in Canada's literary landscape.

**Donna-Michelle St. Bernard** is an activist, emcee, playwright, Artistic Director of New Harlem Productions and General Manager of Native Earth. Her work in various disciplines has been presented at Summerworks, Ignite Festival, ARCFest, Canadian Music Week, NXNE and the Vancouver Folk Music Festival. She has been honoured with the Enbridge Emerging PlayRite Award, Herman Voaden Playwriting Award, a Dora Award for outstanding new play and a playwright residency at Obsidian Theatre, and in 2010 was named as protégé by Mallory Gilbert Leadership Award winner, Naomi Campbell.

**Dr. Trichy Sankaran** is a globally-respected artist, composer, educator and cultural ambassador, who consistently demonstrates mastery, creativity, ingenuity, humility and devotion. Since his professional debut at age 13, Trichy Sankaran has had a prolific international performing career,

appearing as a featured musician at major music festivals and cultural events in Europe, Australia, North America and Asia, including the highly celebrated World Drum concerts at Expo 86 (Vancouver), Expo 88 (Brisbane) and Expo 2000 (Hanover). As an active contributor to the music scene in Canada, he has composed a dynamic body of work that bridges the musical traditions of both India and the West. Collaborations include performances with New Music, jazz, Western Classical music, world fusion and internationally-recognized Carnatic and Hindustani musicians, such as Zakir Hussain, U. Srinivas, Hariprasad Chaurasia.

**TD Bank Group** plays a leadership role in the cultural development of Canada's next generation of artists and audiences. Perhaps best known for its sponsorship of major music festivals, TD also supports cultural education programs and increases accessibility to those programs among Canadian children and youth. From student rush ticket programs to tours to remote communities, TD helps performing arts organizations engage and inspire the next generation. TD is one of Toronto's – and Canada's – most important champions of arts education.

**Theatre Direct** is an award-winning and nationally recognized theatre for young audiences celebrating its 35<sup>th</sup> year. The company's productions have been seen by thousands of young people throughout Toronto, the GTA and across the country in schools, theatre and international festivals. In 2009, Theatre Direct opened the doors to two performance and education venues in the Artscape Wychwood Barns where, in addition to a season of original and invited productions, the company undertakes year-round education and outreach programming for a diverse community of schools and families.

**Young People's Theatre** is the largest Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) company in Canada and a significant institution in the Canadian professional theatre community. Over its 45-year history, YPT has produced many of the most important works that now form the canon of plays for young audiences in this country. Learning is at the centre of everything the company does and YPT is renowned as the showplace for presenting important TYA work developed elsewhere. In addition to being a producer and presenter of theatre, YPT has also been home to a year-round Drama School for youth since 1969.