



## **BACKGROUNDER: TORONTO ARTS FOUNDATION AWARDS AND 2021 FINALISTS**

### **ABOUT – TORONTO ARTS FOUNDATION AWARDS**

Toronto Arts Foundation Awards are presented to artists, cultural leaders and businesses in recognition of artistic excellence, cultural leadership and contribution to the arts. Financial support of the annual Toronto Arts Foundation Awards is provided through a combination of legacies and annual donations from private and corporate donors. The awards are presented annually at the Mayor's Arts Lunch.

### **ABOUT - MARGO BINDHARDT AND RITA DAVIES AWARD**

Established in 1995 as the Margo Bindhardt Award, the Award was re-named the Margo Bindhardt and Rita Davies Cultural Leadership Award in 2000 to honour Margo Bindhardt, past president of the Toronto Arts Council and inaugural president of Toronto Arts Foundation, and Rita Davies, Toronto Arts Council's and Toronto Arts Foundation's first Executive Director, and to recognize their contributions to Toronto's arts and culture sector. This is a \$10,000 cash prize, with finalists receiving \$1,000. The award celebrates an individual artist, creator, volunteer or administrator who has demonstrated creative cultural leadership in the development of arts and culture in Toronto.

### **FINALISTS**

#### **Del Mahabadi**

Del Mahabadi is the Founder and Chief Executive Director of the non-profit music organization Waveland. She is driven by the power that music holds in influencing our society, and is committed to building vibrant and inclusive communities via Canadian music.

#### **Denise Bolduc**

Denise Bolduc is an established creative director and producer who programs to transform perspectives and activate change. Her career of three decades represents countless contributions and connections with numerous celebrated artists, creative thinkers and leading cultural institutions with an emphasis on elevating Indigenous voices. Denise is French and Anishinaabe, a member of Batchewana First Nations with familial ties in Ketegaunseebee.

#### **Dwayne Morgan**

Dwayne Morgan began his career in the spoken word in 1993. Morgan is the author of 13 published and 9 audio collections of his work. Morgan is a 2016 finalist for the Premier's Award for Excellence in the Arts and a 2013 inductee into the Scarborough Walk of Fame.

## **ABOUT – EMERGING ARTIST AWARD**

The Emerging Artist Award is a \$10,000 cash prize, with finalists receiving \$2,000. The award celebrates the accomplishments and future potential of an emerging Toronto artist working in any discipline. Established in 2006, the award is generously sponsored by Susan Crocker and John Hunkin to support the development or completion of new work. The award given to finalist honourees was established in 2014 through the generous donation of the Bulmash-Siegel Fund.

### **FINALISTS**

#### **Britta B.**

Britta B. is a poet, performer, emcee, voice actor, and educator. She teaches poetry and social justice workshops with organizations like JAYU (pronounced JAH-YOU), the League of Canadian Poets and Prologue Performing Arts. Britta is currently a Creative Writing MFA candidate at University of Guelph.

#### **Irma Villafuerte**

Irma Villafuerte is a Tkarón:to-based dancer and educator, first-generation daughter of refugees from Nahuat Pipil Territory Kuskatan, El Salvador. Graduate of George Brown Dance she serves as an educator at Randolph College for the Performing Arts and Casa Maiz' Semillas Latinas summer program. She's been part of Aluna Theatre's Panamerican Routes Festival, Panamania 2015, 12<sup>th</sup> Bienal de la Habana'15, and CounterPulse Performing Diaspora. She's choreographed for Trey Anthony's How Black Mothers Say I love You and is currently incubating a solo "nudoDESnudo".

#### **Olivia Shortt**

(Anishinaabe, Nipissing First Nation) Olivia Shortt is a Tkarón:to-based transdisciplinary performing artist and musician. Career highlights include their Lincoln Center (NYC) debut with the International Contemporary Ensemble, their film debut in Atom Egoyan's 2019 film 'Guest of Honour', & recording an album two kilometres underground in the SnoLAB. They were awarded and named one of the 2020 Buddies in Bad Times' Emerging Queer Artists.

## **ABOUT – EMERGING JAZZ ARTIST AWARD**

The Emerging Jazz Artist Award is a \$10,000 cash prize with finalists receiving \$1,000. The award furthers the career of an outstanding emerging jazz artist and is intended to support the pre-production, production, and/or recording of original music composed by the recipient. Established in 2014, the award is supported by Cheryl and Manuel Buchwald.

### **FINALISTS**

#### **Joanna Majoko**

Toronto-based vocalist, composer, and bandleader Joanna Majoko has established a reputation for herself as one of Canada's most exciting young singers, and is a regular presence on the bandstand with some of the country's top musicians. Born to German and Zimbabwean parents, Majoko spent her childhood in Zimbabwe and brings a rich and diverse set of influences to her performance practice: she is equally at home singing neo-soul, orchestrating a jazz standard

and playing the caxixi and the claves. This year Majoko has released her debut EP, No Holding Back, an astonishing, powerful statement on her personal history, the fruitful collaborative relationships of her musical present, and her vision for the future to come.

### **Sarah Thawer**

Sarah Thawer is a JUNO-Award nominated drummer and recording artist based in Toronto. She started playing drums aged 2 and performing at 5. Sarah is currently performing, recording and touring the world with different artists as well as performing solo and with her own band. She plays a range of genres including, jazz, fusion, Indian, funk, r&b, hip hop, and latin. Sarah studied jazz and world music at York University. A recipient of the Oscar Peterson Scholarship she graduated with the Summa Cum Laude distinction.

### **Virginia MacDonald**

2020 International Clarinetist Corona Competition first prize winner Virginia MacDonald has established herself as a respected and sought-after musician in the Canadian jazz scene. Virginia has worked extensively as a leader and side woman at numerous venues across Toronto and Canada, and has performed in several Canadian and International jazz festivals. Known for her lyrical and soulful clarinet playing, Virginia has been described as a "powerful new voice in the Canadian scene" by Juno Award-winning bassist Mike Downes.

## **ABOUT - THE MURIEL SHERRIN AWARD**

The Muriel Sherrin Award is funded through an endowment created with surplus funds from the 1984 Toronto International Festival of Music and Dance. In 1996, the management of the fund was turned over to Toronto Arts Foundation and the award was renamed in memory of Muriel Sherrin, the producer of the festival. Sherrin, who died in 1994, was a leader in the Canadian artistic community for more than 30 years. This is a \$10,000 cash prize with finalists receiving \$1,000 each, that celebrates an artist or creator who has made a contribution to the cultural life of Toronto through outstanding achievement in music or dance.

## **FINALISTS**

### **Emily Cheung**

Emily Cheung is recognized as one of the leaders in cross-cultural exchange and liaison with foreign artists practicing traditional and contemporary Chinese dance in Toronto. Cheung is involved in preserving Chinese culture and collaborating with artists from other disciplines and ethnic backgrounds to create works with unique aesthetic sensibilities.

### **Mi Young Kim**

Mi Young Kim has established herself as one of the leading figures in the Korean-Canadian cultural scene. She works as a dancer, choreographer and instructor, and founded the Mi Young Kim Folk Dance Institute in 1979. The company then became the Korean Dance Studies Society of Canada, a non-profit organization in 1987.

### **Vivine Scarlett**

Vivine is Founder, Executive Director and Curator for dance Immersion, an organization that supports dancers and dances of the African Diaspora. Her inspired journey continues to provide a variety of platforms that serve Canadian artists of African ancestry with opportunities that have laid a foundation for continued growth and representation.

## **ABOUT – ARTS FOR YOUTH AWARD**

The Arts for Youth Award was established in 2007 by Martha Burns, Jim Fleck and Sandra and Jim Pitblado. The award celebrates an individual, collective or organization that has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to engaging Toronto's youth through the arts and artistic creation. The winner of the award receives a \$20,000 cash prize, with each finalist receiving \$2,000. The finalist awards are supported by a generous donation from Diana Bennett and Spencer Lanthier.

## **FINALISTS**

### **BAM Collective**

Books Art Music (BAM) Collective is a youth-led collective aiming to empower equity-seeking young individuals through art and community engagement in Ontario and New York. Operating from an anti-oppression framework, BAM brings awareness to issues that matter to equity-seeking young individuals and empower them by hosting community art workshops and gatherings. BAM also organizes online campaigns and conferences and runs creative programs to support and connect youth with resources to strengthen our communities.

### **Paprika Festival**

Since 2001, Paprika Festival has been a launching pad for young and emerging artists. Paprika runs free year-round training programs that culminate in the annual Paprika Festival, showcasing new work by new generation artists. Paprika has been the starting point for several of Canada's most celebrated artists and arts leaders.

### **Xpace**

Xpace Cultural Centre is a not-for-profit artist-run centre dedicated to providing emerging and student artists, designers, curators and writers with opportunities to showcase their work in a professional setting. They approach their programming as a form of world-building: providing exhibitions, events, panels and workshops that respond to the direct needs and interests of their communities and membership. Expanding notions of theory and aesthetics, they seek to hold space for thought-provoking and experimental collaborations.

## **ABOUT – TORONTO ARTS AND BUSINESS AWARD**

Every year at the Mayor's Arts Lunch, a local business that has made an important contribution to the arts in Toronto, through innovative and transformational partnerships, is recognized with the Toronto Arts & Business Award. Winners range from national financial institutions and real estate development to small design firms and local businesses. Presented in partnership with

Toronto Arts Foundation, Business/Arts and the Toronto Star, this award was established in 2006.

### **FINALISTS – TORONTO ARTS AND BUSINESS AWARD**

A committee has selected one recipient for the Toronto Arts and Business Award. The winner will be announced at the Mayor's Arts Lunch on May 11, 2021.

### **APPOINTMENT OF PEER ASSESSORS**

Each year, a panel of up to 10 members reviews candidate profiles and makes finalist and recipient recommendations for each award, excepting the Toronto Arts and Business Award, to Toronto Arts Foundation's Board of Directors, which approves final determinations. Peer Assessors must have recognized expertise, prestige, credibility and experience, along with a sense of history and perspective. Each panel is comprised of participants who are practitioners of the arts, organizers, programmers, producers, curators, critics, commentators and lay specialists.

The 2021 Peer Assessors for Margo Bindhardt and Rita Davies Award, Emerging Artist Award, The Muriel Sherrin Award, Arts for Youth Award were **Andy McKim, Nova Bhattacharya, Onika Powell, Ryan Rice (Kanien'kehá:ka of Kahnawake)**, and **Sashar Zarif**.

The 2021 Peer Assessors for Emerging Jazz Artist Award were **Laila Biali, Josh Grossman, Ron Westray, Dione Taylor**, and **Amanda Tosoff**.