

2025 Annual Report

25 Years Uplifting
Outstanding
Theatre Artists



SIMINOVITCH
THEATRE
FOUNDATION



Theatre changes people. Not always in a loud way. Sometimes it's a quiet shift in perspective, a moment of recognition that stays with you long after the lights come up.



The artists we recognize don't just make great work. They lead institutions, mentor the next generation, and shape this country. That ripple effect, from a single prize to a career, from one career to countless others, is what donor support makes possible.

In 2025, at a critical moment of disruption and change, we made a deliberate choice to deepen that investment. With vital support from The William and Nona Heaslip Foundation and the National Arts Centre, the Siminovitch Prize increased to \$100,000, the most significant recognition of its kind for Canadian theatre artists. Finalists also now receive \$10,000 each. For the first

time, we opened eligibility to multi-disciplinary creators, ensuring the Prize reflects the evolving breadth of theatre-making in this country. These were not incremental adjustments. They were a statement about the importance of this work right now.

This year also marked the launch of what we believe will be a consequential chapter in the Foundation's history. The Honourable Margaret Norrie McCain made a transformational long-term investment of \$250,000 and issued a personal challenge to others to join her. Her leadership signals something important: that the moment to deepen funding for Canadian theatre is now.

For 25 years, the Siminovitch Theatre Foundation has celebrated and invested in artists to ensure transformative theatre continues to be created.

As we mark our 25th anniversary, we celebrate the extraordinary artists who make up the Siminovitch community and the impact they continue to have on stages and in communities across the country.

Theatre artists help us examine who we are, confront difficult questions, and imagine different futures. That work has never felt more necessary than it does right now, and the next chapter of the Siminovitch Theatre Foundation is one of deeper investment, broader reach, and bolder ambition. If you believe in the power of theatre to illuminate what it means to be human, we invite you to be part of what comes next.

With gratitude,

AIMÉE IPPERSIEL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DUNCAN MCINTOSH, CHAIR

Cover Image: Meher Pavri performs from *Mahabharata* at the Siminovitch Prize Gala.



The Power of Theatre.

We are living through a moment of profound disruption. Old certainties are dissolving, and in the noise, it has never been harder to find the space to think, to feel, or to genuinely encounter another point of view.

Theatre has always existed for exactly this moment.

Theatre is a live gathering, a room full of people who have chosen, together, to pay attention. To sit beside strangers and follow a story somewhere unexpected. To have their assumptions quietly dismantled, or their private grief suddenly recognized on a stage.

The artists the Siminovitch Theatre Foundation invests in have dedicated their lives to expanding what theatre can do and who it can reach. Their work opens up questions that other art forms struggle to hold. They create experiences that linger, get discussed, and change how people see themselves and each other.

Image: *Maurice*, written and performed by Anne-Marie Olivier.

"Theatre, by its nature, gathers us. It asks us to consider another point of view, another experience, another way to be. We sit next to each other as neighbours. We need each other's imaginations to create the world. And if we can imagine another world, then we can create it."

— RAVI JAIN, 2025 LAUREATE

Impact at a Glance

Artists recognized through the Siminovitch Theatre Foundation report significant professional benefits, expanded opportunities, and stronger connections within Canada's theatre community.

BY THE NUMBERS

25

years supporting theatre artists

134

artists recognized through the Siminovitch Prize and related programs

\$2.8

million invested in theatre artists and their creative potential

IMPACT ON ARTISTS

79%

increased professional profile

64%

professional networks expanded

59%

connections led to new creative opportunities

95%

financial award was a valuable benefit

EXTENDING THE REACH

100%

Siminovitch documentary series is valuable

91%

share the documentaries as part of their professional work

How We Support Artists

The Siminovitch Theatre Foundation supports artists at pivotal moments and connects them to a national community of theatre makers.

RECOGNITION

We shine a spotlight on theatre artists whose work demonstrates exceptional creativity and impact. National recognition raises the visibility of their work and opens the door to new audiences, collaborators, and opportunities.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Prizes, grants, and collaborative funding provide artists with resources to devote more time to their craft, pursue new ideas, and take creative risks.

COMMUNITY-BUILDING

Mentorship opportunities, residencies, and alumni gatherings connect Siminovitch honourees across regions and disciplines, creating space for dialogue, collaboration, skill-building, and mutual support.

"The Siminovitch Prize is a gift of encouragement - for whom among us in the theatre has not doubted or despaired in the midst of plying their craft? But, this national recognition and the opportunity to share my practice with a broader public, have seismically shifted my sense of possibility."

— ESTELLE SHOOK, 2025 FINALIST

Opposite image: Jenna-Lee Hyde, Kathleen MacLean and Howard Dai.



Core Programs

Siminovitch Theatre Foundation programs recognize artistic leadership, support emerging talent, and strengthen connections among theatre artists across Canada.

The Siminovitch Prize Canada's most valuable theatre award provides \$100,000 to a peer-selected Laureate and \$25,000 to their chosen Protégé, with three additional finalists receiving \$10,000 each.

Emerging Artist Grants Each Siminovitch Prize finalist selects an emerging artist to receive a \$5,000 grant, national profile, and \$2,000 to support collaboration with their mentor.

Artist-in-Residence Program A two-week residency at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity gives two artists the time and space to explore new ideas and connect with artists from across the country.

National and Regional Events Through a national celebration event and regional alumni gatherings, artists connect with peers, cultural leaders, and potential collaborators, building confidence and lasting relationships.

Siminovitch Showcase Documentaries Bilingual documentaries that capture each finalist's creative journey, shared nationally through the Foundation's website, YouTube channel, social media, and on Air Canada flights.

Backstage Conversations Recorded dialogues that connect theatre artists with broader audiences through intimate conversations about their creative processes and perspectives.

The Siminovitch Lab (Pilot) Brings together Siminovitch artists with experts in other sectors to explore innovative solutions to complex societal challenges.

A Nationwide Community of Artists

Exceptional Canadian theatre is made in cities and towns across the country. A director in Halifax may know the work of a designer in Vancouver. A playwright in Winnipeg may have long admired a director in Montreal. But the distances are vast, and the opportunities to meet, sit together, share a meal, and talk about the work are rare.

The Siminovitch Theatre Foundation changes that. Each year, artists recognized through our programs join a national community that now includes 134 theatre makers at every stage of their careers, working in every region of Canada and in both official languages.

We bring them together. Artists who previously knew each other only

by reputation meet face-to-face. Conversations that might never have happened begin. Ideas are exchanged. Collaborations take root. Artists who may have felt isolated in their practice discover they are part of something larger, and the person they long admired is now someone they can call.

Members of the Siminovitch community go on to collaborate on productions, mentor emerging artists, and support one another across careers and decades. This network grows stronger every year.

Image: Siminovitch Prize honourees, past and present.



"Making theatre is like preparing a meal for people we love. Offering a balm for the heart and mind. Speaking to the intelligence of the audience. Speaking to those who are ready to fight, to defend dignity and beauty. Theatre is not done alone; we create families to bring our creations to fruition."

— ANNE-MARIE OLIVIER, 2025 FINALIST

The Siminovitch Prize

Recognizing the Groundbreaking Artists Advancing Theatre

The Siminovitch Prize is Canada's most valuable performing arts award, recognizing excellence and innovation in mid-career theatre artists whose work has made a remarkable contribution to Canadian theatre.

Honourees are recognized for the originality of their artistic voice, their evolving body of work, and their continued experimentation. They expand the possibilities of theatre by developing new practices, exploring new questions and voices, and nurturing meaningful artistic collaborations.

The Prize is not a lifetime achievement award. It recognizes artists whose work continues to grow and influence audiences, collaborators, emerging artists, and the broader theatre community.

Artists across the country are nominated by their peers, and a shortlist and Laureate are chosen by a national jury of theatre professionals.

The Siminovitch Prize shortlist is presented with the generous support of Power Corporation of Canada, whose partnership helps elevate exceptional theatre artists on a national stage.

The Siminovitch Prize Gala

The annual Siminovitch Prize Gala brings together artists, supporters, and cultural leaders from across Canada for one of the country's most distinctive evenings in the performing arts.

Eight artists are at the heart of the evening: four finalists for the Siminovitch Prize, and four emerging artists. Through short documentary portraits of each finalist, guests are invited into the lives and creative worlds of some of Canada's most exceptional theatre makers. The announcement of the Laureate and Protégé is a central moment of the event.

It is a rare occasion when the full breadth of the Siminovitch community is gathered in one room, and when the broader cultural community is reminded of what theatre, at its best, can do.

We are grateful to the partners and donors whose generosity makes the Gala possible, and whose commitment ensures that exceptional theatre artists are recognized and celebrated.

Image: 2025 Siminovitch Prize finalists: Ravi Jain, Adrienne Wong, Estelle Shook, and Anne-Marie Olivier.



The 2025 Siminovitch Prize Gala was supported by Tricon, Blakes, the Rotman family, Ira Gluskin and Maxine Granovsky Gluskin, and Burgundy Asset Management.

Honouring Lou and Elinore Siminovitch

A Legacy Built on Creative Excellence



In 2001, twelve visionary donors came together to honour Lou and Elinore Siminovitch, two remarkable Canadians whose impact on theatre and public life continues to be felt today.

Elinore, a pioneering playwright, had passed away five years earlier. The Prize was created in her memory and in celebration of Lou for his scientific achievements.

The twelve founders made a deliberate choice to fund a significant prize immediately rather than build a permanent endowment. With generous support from BMO, that founding commitment sustained the Siminovitch Prize for over a decade.

When its future became uncertain in 2012, Kathy and Margo Siminovitch, two of Lou and Elinore's daughters, rallied supporters to establish the independent Siminovitch Theatre Foundation.

Since then, the Prize has been sustained entirely through annual fundraising, renewed each year by donors who share Lou and Elinore's

belief in the power of theatre and creativity to enrich life.

Learn more about Lou and Elinore: siminovitchprize.com/founding-story

SIMINOVITCH PRIZE FOUNDERS

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Image: Elinore and Lou Siminovitch.

The Honourees

Jury-Selected Artists

Laureate

Receives the \$100,000 Siminovitch Prize, a two-week residency at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, and a professionally created documentary about their work.

Finalists

Each of the three remaining finalists receives \$10,000 along with a professionally created documentary about their work.

Artists Supporting the Next Generation

Protégé Prize

The Laureate selects an emerging theatre artist to receive the \$25,000 Protégé Prize and join them for the two-week Banff residency.

Emerging Artist Grants

The three finalists each select an emerging artist to receive a \$5,000 grant, professionally developed online artist profiles, and additional funding to support collaboration between the artists.

All artists recognized through the Siminovitch Prize also receive national recognition and media promotion, invitations to Siminovitch events, and ongoing connection to the Foundation's artist network.

Siminovitch Prize Benefits	Laureate	Finalists (x3)	Protégé	Emerging Artists (x 3)
Prize Amount	\$100,000	\$10,000	\$25,000	\$5,000
National Promotion	✓	✓	✓	✓
Professional Profile	✓	✓	✓	✓
Siminovitch Event Participation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Collaboration Funding (\$2,000)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Peer Network Access	✓	✓	✓	✓
Short Documentary	✓	✓	-	-
Banff Residency	✓	-	✓	-

Banff Centre Residency

Each year, the Laureate and Protégé participate in a two-week residency at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, in partnership with the National Arts Centre. The residency offers dedicated time to step away from daily demands, explore new ideas, and build lasting professional relationships with artists from across the country.

In 2025, lighting designer and 2024 Laureate Sonoyo Nishikawa participated in this residency with her Protégé, Mayumi Ide-Bergeron. While they were familiar with each other's work, they did not have a personal relationship before the Siminovitch Prize brought them together.

During the residency, Sonoyo and Mayumi exchanged ideas, connected with fellow artists, and began building a collaborative relationship that has continued beyond their time in Banff. For Mayumi, this experience expanded her network beyond Montreal and strengthened her confidence as an artist:

"The Banff residency created space to step away from my routine and build meaningful connections with other artists. That time was so valuable."

- MAYUMI IDE-BERGERON, 2024 PROTÉGÉ

How Artists Are Selected

The Siminovitch Prize is decided by artists, for artists. There are no public votes, no celebrity panels, no algorithms. Recognition begins when a theatre maker nominates a peer whose work they believe deserves wider recognition.

A jury of respected theatre professionals reviews the nominations and selects four finalists. From that group, one artist is named the year's Laureate.

The result is a prize grounded in peer recognition. When an artist is honoured through the Siminovitch process, it reflects the judgement of those who understand the craft most deeply, and who recognize what the work demands and achieves.

THANK YOU TO THE 2025 JURY

We are deeply grateful to the jury members whose knowledge, care, and discernment make the selection process a genuine act of peer recognition, carried out with integrity.

In 2025, Guillermo Verdecchia concluded his four-year term as Jury Chair. A Governor General's Award recipient and four-time Chalmers Award winner, Verdecchia is a playwright, director, and dramaturge whose work has been defined by collaboration.

It is hard to imagine a more fitting steward for this Prize. Over four years, Guillermo brought a deep commitment to the future of Canadian theatre, and we thank him for his extraordinary service.



Guillermo Verdecchia,
Jury Chair



Danielle Irvine,
Jury Member



Mike Payette,
Jury Member



Christine Quintana,
Jury Member



Simon Rossiter,
Jury Member



Jean-Simon Traversy,
Jury Member

2025 Laureate Ravi Jain

Ravi Jain makes theatre that is ambitious in scale, global in reach, and radical in who gets to tell the story.

As founding Artistic Director of Why Not Theatre, Jain has spent two decades reimagining classic works and creating new ones. His work ranges from the intimate family story *A Brimful of Asha* to *Prince Hamlet*, which placed Deaf culture and gender fluidity at its heart, to *Mahabharata*.

The jury recognized Jain not only as an exceptional artist but also as a builder. He has created concrete pathways for emerging artists through initiatives like the RISER Project and ThisGen. Jain's leadership, in the jury's words, is defined by "generosity and adaptability." He is a creator of remarkable range and audacity, whose career has consistently redefined what Canadian theatre can be.



Image: Ravi Jain.

"At the heart of what I do is create processes and work that inspire alternative visions of existence. Art is a tool for social change, both the process and the art are revolutions of imagination - and ways to inspire us all to be better listeners, feelers and people."

— RAVI JAIN, 2025 LAUREATE

2025 Protégé Miriam Fernandes

Presented by the Sabourin Family Foundation

Each year, the Siminovitch Prize Laureate selects an emerging theatre artist to receive the Protégé Prize, recognizing exceptional promise and supporting the next generation of theatre creators through mentorship and artistic collaboration. In 2025, Ravi Jain selected Miriam Fernandes as his Protégé.

Miriam Fernandes is Co-Artistic Director of Why Not Theatre. A creator and performer for more than a decade, she is now increasingly focused on directing.

Her recent creation work includes *Mahabharata* and *What You Won't Do for Love*, featuring David Suzuki and Tara Cullis. Directing credits include *Hayavadana*, *Metamorphoses*, and *The Courage to Right a Woman's Wrongs*.

A graduate of École Jacques Lecoq in Paris, Fernandes has received Dora Mavor Moore Awards for Best Performance by an Individual and Best New Play for *Mahabharata*, which was also recognized as Best Production.



Image: Miriam Fernandes.

2025 Prize Finalists

The three finalists recognized in 2025 represent a wide range of theatre practice across Canada, from directing and playwriting to performance and interdisciplinary creation. Each has developed a distinctive body of work that continues to influence Canadian theatre.



Adrienne Wong

Adrienne Wong is a theatre creator, director, performer, and writer whose work bridges theatre and digital performance. Her projects include *The Apology Generator*, *SadSongs.ca*, *Landline*, and *Me On The Map*. Former Artistic Producer at Newworld Theatre, Wong is now Artistic Director of SpiderWebShow Performance and co-curator of the Festival of Live Digital Art (FOLDA), where she champions innovative approaches to storytelling and live performance.



Anne-Marie Olivier

Anne-Marie Olivier is a playwright and performer whose work explores identity, memory, and human relationships through deeply personal storytelling. Her play *Venir au monde* received the Governor General's Literary Award for Drama in 2018. Olivier has performed internationally and collaborated with Wajdi Mouawad on major productions. She previously served as co-general and artistic director of Théâtre du Trident and now teaches at the Conservatoire d'art dramatique de Québec.



Estelle Shook

Estelle Shook is a theatre director and cultural leader known for her work in large-scale, outdoor, site-specific theatre. At Caravan Farm Theatre, based on an eighty-acre farm in the North Okanagan, she has helped shape an internationally recognized model of open-air performance. Her work expands how Canadian theatre engages with land and audience, grounded in a strong sense of place.

Emerging Artist Grant Recipients

Each of the three finalists selects an early-career artist to champion – recognizing exceptional promise and creating space for mentorship and artistic collaboration.

This is a deliberately relational model. The finalist becomes an advocate, and the emerging artist gains not only resources but also a meaningful connection to someone who can open doors, share hard-won knowledge, and offer the kind of guidance that only comes from experience.

It reflects one of the Foundation's core beliefs: that great theatre doesn't develop in isolation. It grows through relationships, across generations, and through artists at every stage of their career, investing in one another.



Howard Dai (Selected by Adrienne Wong)

A Taiwanese actor, writer, and theatre maker based in Vancouver whose interdisciplinary work spans theatre, film, digital media, and interactive performance. His projects have been presented across Canada and internationally, including residencies with PuSh Festival and Royal Court Theatre.



Mary-Lee Picknell (Selected by Anne-Marie Olivier)

A Quebec City-based actor and playwright who has performed in more than forty productions across Canada and Europe. Founder of the company Les Hébertistes, she began writing in 2021; her first play *Heimat/Revenir* was produced by Théâtre La Bordée and published by Atelier 10.



Kathleen MacLean (Selected by Estelle Shook)

A 2Spirit Métis–Settler theatre artist from Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis. A graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada, they are Artistic Associate at Gordon Tootoosis Nīkānīwin Theatre and have performed with companies including Persephone Theatre, the Globe Theatre, Stratford Festival, and the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre.

A National Community in Action

In 2025, members of the Siminovitch Theatre Foundation community continued to work together, inspire each other, and open doors for one another across the country.

Artists Creating Together

In 2025, artists in the Siminovitch community continued to collaborate across regions, disciplines, and career stages. Director Chris Abraham (2013 Laureate) and set designer Joshua Quinlan (2021 Protégé) collaborated on *Wights* at Crow's Theatre in Toronto, bringing together established artistic leadership and emerging design talent.

Lighting designer Sonoyo Nishikawa (2024 Laureate) also collaborated with The Old Trout Puppet Workshop (2024 Finalist) on *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* at Alberta Theatre.

Creating Space for New Work

These relationships also created space for new work and emerging voices. In 2025, d'bi.young annitafrica (2023 Finalist) directed *LULU*, a new Afro-Caribbean folktale by playwright Sashoya Simpson (2023 Emerging Artist), presented at the Toronto Fringe Festival.

Mentorship is a key part of this exchange. During the remount of *Dance Nation*, lighting designer Itai Erdal (2024 Finalist) mentored 2024 Emerging Artist Hina Nishioka, who gained hands-on experience adapting a complex design for a new venue.

Connections That Open Doors

Some of these connections unfold in less visible ways, but with lasting impact. A Siminovitch documentary reintroduced Artistic Director of the National Arts Centre English Theatre, Nina Lee Aquino, to the work of Newfoundland playwright Berni Stapleton, leading to a new commission. Sarah Kitz, Artistic Director of the Great Canadian Theatre Company, and director of Berni's piece then reached out to the Playwrights Atlantic Resource Centre with a direct question: which other Atlantic playwrights should she know?

This is the ripple effect of the Foundation's work. A documentary created to celebrate a finalist became the catalyst for a commission, and for a theatre leader actively seeking out voices from a region she had underexplored.

Shaping the Field

In 2025, playwright Tara Beagan (2020 Laureate) received the Governor General's Literary Award for Drama for her play *Rise, Red River*.

Opposite image: *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, featuring the work of The Old Trout Puppet Workshop and Sonoyo Nishikawa.

"Kinanâskomitin to the Indigenous and Queer storytellers who have come before me — I stand on their shoulders."

— KATHLEEN MACLEAN, 2025 EMERGING ARTIST GRANTEE

Since its inception, the Siminovitch community has contributed to the field in significant ways:

45

Siminovitch Prize honourees have founded theatre companies

61

honourees have served as artistic directors

28

Governor General's Awards have been earned by honourees, along with 38 nominations

3

honourees have been appointed to the Order of Canada



"The Old Trout Puppet Workshop phone hasn't stopped ringing since we were named finalists for the Siminovitch Prize."

— PITYU KENDERES, 2024 FINALIST

Siminovitch Showcase Documentaries

Each year, the Foundation produces four short documentary films, one for each Prize finalist. These films do something that a review or a program note cannot: bring audiences inside the creative process and introduce the person behind the work.

In 2025, the films once again screened on Air Canada flights and were distributed through Siminovitch channels, reaching audiences nationwide. For many viewers, they are a first encounter with artists celebrated within the theatre community but less known to broader audiences.

The films are also finding a lasting home in post-secondary classrooms, where instructors across Canada are using them to introduce the next generation of theatre makers to artists shaping the field today.

What began as a way to celebrate the finalists has become an evolving archive of Canadian theatre in the making, and a way of ensuring that the artists the Prize honours are known not just by their peers, but by the country.

Image: Siminovitch Showcase documentaries featured on Air Canada flights.



2025 documentaries were made possible through the generous support of the Birks Family Foundation, Katherine Graham Debost, Tim and Francis Price, Irfhan Rawji, the Stewart Fund, the Victoria Foundation, Air Canada and the RBC Foundation.

Backstage Conversations

Some of the most valuable exchanges in theatre happen offstage, between artists who understand each other's work from the inside. Backstage Conversations create space for exactly that.

Each episode brings together artists across generations, disciplines, and regions for candid, unscripted discussions about craft, process, and the larger questions their work is trying to answer. These are not interviews; they are conversations between peers, and the difference is clear.

IN 2025:

- Ronnie Burkett and The Old Trout Puppet Workshop compared the solitary and collective creative process, and the financial realities of sustaining an unconventional art form.
- Sound designer Debashis Sinha and German playwright Roland Schimmelpfennig explored how sound and language create images that outlast the performance itself.

- Lighting designer Itai Erdal and director Peter Hinton examined the director-designer relationship: the trust, shared vocabulary, and vulnerability that opens a rehearsal room up to genuine discovery.
- Ravi Jain and Alisa Palmer reflected on what it takes to create theatre of genuine scale without a permanent home.
- And the four 2025 Siminovitch finalists, Ravi Jain, Anne-Marie Olivier, Estelle Shook, and Adrienne Wong, met one another for the first time on camera!

The Backstage Conversations series is building an archive of contemporary Canadian theatre that students, artists, and audiences across the country are increasingly turning to. These conversations reveal the varied and pressing question shaping the field today.

Image: Backstage Conversations featuring Debashis Sinha and Roland Schimmelpfennig (left), and Ravi Jain and Alisa Palmer (right).



2025 Backstage Conversations were made possible through the generous support of TD, RBC, Kingfisher Foundation, and the McLean Smits Family Foundation.

The Siminovitch Lab

Throughout history, theatre artists have expanded civic imagination and shaped how societies understand themselves. Yet their contributions beyond the stage are often undervalued. The Siminovitch Lab is built on the hypothesis that this particular community of artists, recognized for innovation, risk-taking, and the ability to hold complexity, has something distinctive to offer organizations facing complex, entrenched challenges.

We began testing this hypothesis. Working with artists across the Siminovitch community, we mapped shared creative processes and artistic capacities and explored how they might apply in contexts far beyond the theatre.

Siminovitch artists are comfortable with uncertainty and resist prematurely resolving ambiguity. They listen deeply and create the conditions for trust and candour among people who may not

share a common language. They can introduce doubt into rigid thinking without triggering defensiveness. As one artist put it, they can act as a trickster who surfaces what isn't being said. They work iteratively, from questions rather than solutions, and are skilled at making abstract ideas tangible through narrative, metaphor, and embodied experience. Perhaps most distinctively, they are trained to envision what doesn't yet exist, helping people see and feel a possible future rather than simply describe it.

In 2026, we plan to run pilot projects pairing Siminovitch honourees with organizations in other sectors facing real challenges. By year's end, we aim to have working examples of what this collaboration can produce, and a clearer understanding of how it could be offered more broadly.



Speaking Across Languages



Theatre in Canada is not a monolithic community. Artists working in different languages are shaped by distinct traditions, histories, aesthetics, and relationships to the art form. Too often, exceptional artists working in one language remain largely unknown to peers and audiences in another.

The Siminovitch Theatre Foundation produces all of its content in both English and French, creating opportunities for artists to encounter one another's work. A francophone

artist's documentary can reach an anglophone theatre maker across the country. A Backstage Conversation recorded in Victoria can open a door for an artist in Montreal who might not otherwise encounter that work.

In these moments, something shifts. Ideas cross boundaries. Artists discover peers they didn't know they had. The community, in all its complexity and diversity, becomes a little more connected.

Opposite Image:
SmartSmart by Adrienne Wong.

Image: *Mahabharata*, directed by Ravi Jain, featuring Miriam Fernandes.

Looking Ahead

The Siminovitch Theatre Foundation enters its next chapter with a clear sense of purpose and growing momentum.

The 2026–2029 strategic plan builds on the foundation laid over the past five years, deepening the community of artists, expanding who sees themselves in that community, and strengthening the organization's capacity to sustain this work for the long term.

In practical terms, this means bringing the Siminovitch community together in more places across the country, extending network gatherings to connect artists who might otherwise never meet in person. It means formalizing mentorship so that the

relationships the Prize sparks become lasting ones. It means broadening the documentary archive for artists, students, and audiences for generations to come. It also means exploring new initiatives that create space for artists to experiment and push the art form forward together.

Underlying all of this is a conviction the Siminovitch Theatre Foundation has held since its founding: investing in exceptional artists is a meaningful investment in the future of this country. Theatre connects us to ourselves, to each other, and to the world around us. The artists the Siminovitch Prize honours are the people making that possible.

"As an artist and board member who has experienced the transformative impact of the Siminovitch Prize, I know how powerfully it can shape a career — and, just as importantly, a community. This next chapter intends to build on that legacy by expanding who feels included, supported, and seen. At a time when many artists in Canada are facing unprecedented challenges, the need to uplift bold, visionary voices has never been greater. The Siminovitch Theatre Foundation shows that investing in artists means sustaining Canadian theatre — and those who shape it — well into the future."

– MAIKO YAMAMOTO, 2019 LAUREATE

How We Are Funded

The Siminovitch Theatre Foundation is a registered charity whose work is made possible entirely through the generosity of individuals and organizations who believe in the importance of supporting Canadian theatre artists.

The Foundation was established in honour of Lou and Elinore Siminovitch, whose legacy lives on in the Prize that bears their name. The Foundation carries no family endowment.

The Theatre Trust

The Theatre Trust is a group of multi-year donors whose sustained support changes what the Foundation can do, and how we do it. When funding is stable, we can plan in advance, develop long-term mentorship relationships, build a documentary archive, and invest in new initiatives with the patience they require. The difference between a one-time gift and a multi-year commitment is not just financial; it is the difference between reacting and building.

Theatre Trust members start at \$5,000 per year and commit for at least three years. In return, they become genuine insiders: acknowledged in all Foundation communications, invited to the annual Gala to meet the artists, and included in exclusive gatherings that offer a rare behind-the-scenes view of the creative process.

We are deeply grateful to the members of the Theatre Trust listed here, and we invite others who believe in the future of Canadian theatre to join them.

Diane Blake & Stephen Smith

The Honourable Margaret
Norrie McCain

Power Corporation of Canada

Sabourin Family Foundation

The William and Nona Heaslip
Foundation

The Youssef-Warren Foundation

TD Ready Commitment

Colin Jackson & Arlene Strom

Palmer Family Foundation

Kingfisher Foundation

Birks Family Foundation

Duncan McIntosh &
Wade MacLauchlan

Rob Bell & Diane Walker

George Thomson & Judith Beaman

McLean Smits Family Foundation

Margie Zeidler

Catalysts (\$100,000+)

Power Corporation of Canada

Diane Blake & Stephen Smith

Margaret Norrie McCain

The Sabourin Family Foundation

The Youssef-Warren Foundation

Anonymous

National Arts Centre

Palmer Family Foundation

Royal Bank of Canada

TD Ready Commitment

George Thomson & Judith Beaman

McLean Smits Family Foundation

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Luminaries (\$10,000+)

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Ira Gluskin & Maxine Granovsky Gluskin

Mawer Investment Management

Jill & Geoff Matus

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The Larry and Judy Tanenbaum Family Foundation

Tricon

Margie Zeidler

Innovators (\$5,000-\$9,000)

Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity

Bernard Amyot

Kathy Graham Debost

K.M. Hunter Charitable Foundation

Susan Lightstone

Alexandra Montgomery

Tim and Francis Price

Rawji Family Foundation

Dr. Kathy Siminovitch

Margo Siminovitch & Alan Peterson

Stewart Fund

Victoria Foundation

Visionaries (\$20,000+)

Rob Bell & Diane Walker

Birks Family Foundation

Gill Evans

Colin Jackson & Arlene Strom

The William and Nona Heaslip Foundation

Kingfisher Foundation

Duncan McIntosh & Wade MacLauchlan

Shortlist Presenter



Protégé Prize Presenter



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Corporate Sponsors



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Financial Overview

The Siminovitch Theatre Foundation is committed to careful stewardship of the resources entrusted to us. In 2025, Siminovitch Theatre Foundation received \$686,500 to support our national programs. The majority of expenditures were directed to program delivery.

2025 Expenses



● Program Expenses – 61.6%

● Administration – 4.9%

● Staff Costs – 29.5%

● Fundraising – 4.0%

*Audited financial statements will be available upon request in July 2026.

Board of Directors



Rob Bell



Diane Blake



Gillian Evans



Briony Glassco



Camilla Holland



Colin Jackson



**Susan
Lightstone**



**Duncan
McIntosh, Chair**



**Alexandra
Montgomery,
Vice-Chair**



Fanny Pagé



**Eric Savoie,
Treasurer**



George Thomson



Maiko Yamamoto

Our Deepest Thanks

Theatre artists help us examine who we are, confront difficult questions, and imagine different futures. That work has never felt more necessary than it does right now.

In 2025, the Siminovitch Theatre Foundation marked twenty-five years of investing in the artists who make that work possible. We celebrated exceptional artists, strengthened a national community, and laid the groundwork for the Foundation's next chapter.

To our donors and supporters: you make this possible in the most direct sense. Without you, there is no Siminovitch Prize, no community, no next generation of theatre makers finding their footing with a safety net.

Your belief in the importance of this work shows up on stages, in classrooms, and in the careers of artists across this country.

To the artists in the Siminovitch community: you are the reason for all of it. Thank you for the work you make, the generosity you show one another, and the standard you set for what Canadian theatre can be.

To our partners, board members, jury members, and friends: thank you for lending your time, judgment, and commitment to this community year after year.

We are proud of what we built together in 2025. And we are excited about what comes next.

"Navigating difference — and whatever discomfort that might follow — is increasingly important in an era defined by division, partisanship, and binaries. As theatre artists, we have the ability to be present in complex spaces that are full of ambiguity. By witnessing our acts of attending to complexity, to nuance, to contradiction, perhaps our audiences can find insight, understanding, and relief."

— ADRIENNE WONG, 2025 FINALIST



Image: Members of the Siminovitch Theatre Foundation community

SIMINOVITCH THEATRE FOUNDATION

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