



Cole Foundation continues support of Montreal theatre companies

Intercultural Conversations– Conversations Interculturelles

Encouraging theatrical dialogue between the various cultures in Montreal

Fourteen local companies awarded invaluable grant money for their upcoming seasons

MONTREAL, May 2011 - The **Cole Foundation** is excited to announce the *Intercultural Conversations-Conversations Interculturelles* program grants totalling \$148,140 to professional theatre companies in Montreal for their 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 seasons. The Cole Foundation created this grant program to encourage a better understanding and greater social harmony amongst the various cultural communities of Montreal through the presentation of professional French and English language theatre that shows these diverse cultures in conversation. *Intercultural Conversations* consists of production grants, commissioning grants and translation grants to both French and English companies.

For the 2010-2011 season competition, the Cole Foundation received 36 applications from 23 companies- 11 English and 12 French. Thirteen applications were for commissioned plays from Quebec playwrights, 5 applications were for translations and 18 applications were for production grants. Nine companies specialized in theatre for young audiences. This is a vital and significant grant for Montreal companies, some of which receive no other funding. Grant applications for upcoming seasons are available mid-June.

Barry Cole, President of the Cole Foundation, is delighted with the ever-increasing interest from local theatre companies; "The competition this year had an increase of 35% in the number of applications. Of note was the number of applications for commissions, which could indicate that Artistic Directors wanted a specific play that addresses issues that are important to them." Still, Cole expected more activity from Francophone companies, "It's statistically surprising that applications from French and English theatre companies were almost 50-50, since there are far more French theatre companies than Anglophone ones." He is hoping for more Francophone applicants for the upcoming round of grants. Whether in French or English, Cole is excited about local theatre artists, "A great perk of my job is seeing the awarded creations in Montreal theatres."

Awarded companies

Fourteen theatre companies are recipients of the third year of this grant. **Commissioning grants** include: **Infini theatre**- *A Song for Quebec*, by David Sherman; **Scapegoat Carnivale** – *Blind*, by Lindsay Wilson; **Tableau D'Hote**- *Hostel International* by Rob Denton; **Porte Parole**- *The Fredy Project*, by Annabel Soutar; **Black Theatre Workshop**- *What You Didn't Know About Elephants* by Chimwemwe Miller (Production grant as well), and **Les Indisciplinaires**- *Autout de Pablo Neruda-Phase 2*, by Cécile Lasserre. **Production grant** awards go to: **Centaur Theatre Company** *Intimate Apparel*; **Teesri Duniya**- *The Poster (L’Affiche)*; **Le Théâtre Motus**- *Dans les yeux de mon pere*; **Les Productions Nebka**- *Le Coyote*; **Mythomanie**- *L’Etrangere*; **Théâtre À l’Envers**- *L’Ezdai*; **Toxique Trottoir**- *Sortir des murs* and **Théâtre Aux Écuries**- *Rencontres*.

Theatre companies respond

Roy Surette, Artistic Director for the Centaur Theatre Company, is grateful to the Cole Foundation for its help with *Intimate Apparel*, “Set in 1905, the staging, design elements, sound score and casting requirements are all complex. The *Intercultural Conversations* grant has enabled us to put together a fantastic team of creative artists to go into the project with assurance.” For Théâtre Motus’ Co-Artistic Director, **Hélène Ducharme**, the grant contributes to unique moments and stages in their creative process, “Our project includes intercultural conversations and workshops with the Latino-American community in Montreal schools, the Maison de la Culture Mercier and at Théâtre de la Ville.” **Joëlle Tougas**, Codirector of Théâtre À l’Envers, a theatre company for young audiences, adds, “With support from the Cole Foundation, the company continues its mission by creating its second show, *L’Ezdai*, which explores the difficulties children face when moving to new places. We also offer cultural mediation work by creating family workshops.” For **Annabel Soutar**, Artistic Director of Porte Parole, The Cole Foundation's commissioning grant allowed her to embark on the research and creation of their next documentary play, about the shooting death of Fredy Villanueva, “This early stage of play development is very precious, but often challenging to raise funds for. We feel incredibly lucky to have received this support.” **Muriel de Zangroniz** is the Co-Artistic Director of Toxique Trottoir, a street theatre company in the Rosemont area. The support from the Cole Foundation allows them to produce a collective creation with professional artists and citizens mainly from the Maghreb community. “We aim to dispel, through humour, the clichés and prejudices that are often attached to the North African community.” She continues, “The Foundation supports a crucial issue of our organization: that of living well together, and a vision that art can connect, communicate and transcend differences to better link the social fabric.”

The Intercultural Conversations – Conversations Interculturelles program was established to promote cultural bridging that fosters knowledge and tolerance of our social realities. Upcoming grants apply for the 2012-13 and 2013-14 seasons. The deadline for the fourth competition for this meaningful award is October 7. Theatre companies interested in applying for a grant should contact the Cole Foundation, attention Barry Cole, at barrycole@videotron.ca. Forms will be available online where you will also find further information: www.colefoundation.ca

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If you would like to interview Barry Cole, Cole Foundation President-
Media Relations: Janis Kirshner, (514) 287-8912, jkirshner@sympatico.ca.

About the Cole Foundation

The Cole Foundation is a private family foundation based in Montreal, initiated in 1980 by the late J. N. (Jack) Cole, a Montreal businessman and philanthropist. It supports research in pediatric leukemia and related diseases, as well as a program of support for community initiatives. *Intercultural Conversations* is one of its community initiatives. The catalyst for *Intercultural Conversations* was the Bouchard Taylor Commission, which recognized the multicultures of Montreal and the need to increase the intercultural dialogue between these communities.

Barry Cole- President, Cole Foundation

Barry Cole has had a 30-year career in the management of the performing arts, with an emphasis on classical music. He has been the Director of the Performing Arts Office at Queen's University at Kingston, Ontario, designing a cultural programme for both the city and the university communities, a Grants Officer in the Music Section of the Canada Council in Ottawa, the Managing Director of the Kitchener Waterloo Symphony Orchestra in Ontario, the Executive Director of the Royal and McPherson Theatres Society in Victoria, British Columbia and the Manager of the theatre programme at the Saidye Bronfman Centre for the Arts in Montreal.

A member of the Board of the Cole Foundation for the past 11 years, he has led the transformation of the Cole Foundation as the responsibilities for it have been passed down to the second generation of the family. Through his leadership, the support for research in pediatric leukemia and related diseases has become focused with programmes developed in conjunction with the Université de Montreal, McGill University, and the Institut Armand-Frappier of the Université du Québec. The *Intercultural Conversations* programme (*Conversations Interculturelles*) has been developed to increase the social and cultural awareness of Montrealers to the richness of the multi-cultural community as a whole through the presentation of professional theatre showing these communities in dialogue with each other.