



Cole Foundation continues support of Montreal theatre companies

Intercultural Conversations– Conversations Interculturelles

Encouraging theatrical dialogue between the various cultures in Montreal

Twelve local companies awarded invaluable grant money for their upcoming seasons

MONTREAL, June 2012 - The **Cole Foundation** is excited to announce the ***Intercultural Conversations-Conversations Interculturelles*** program grants totalling \$199,900 to professional theatre companies in Montreal for their 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. Noteworthy is funding for the *Intercultural Conversations* program has been augmented by \$50,000 this year.

For this season's competition, the Cole Foundation received 46 applications from 32 companies- 18 English and 14 French. This is a 28% increase from the previous year. Nine applications were for commissioned plays, 7 applications were for translations and 30 applications were for production grants. Four companies specialize in theatre for young audiences. This is a vital and significant grant for Montreal companies, some of which receive no other funding.

Barry Cole, President of the Cole Foundation, is happy to see the ever-increasing interest from local theatre companies; "Not only are the numbers going up, but more importantly, it is exciting to see the quality artistic creations that the Foundation has supported." He continues, "Besides gaining traction and attracting new theatre companies, seeing ongoing awareness in the need for intercultural conversations is very gratifying." Cole is hoping even more companies get involved for the next round of grants.

Awarded companies

Twelve theatre companies are recipients of the fourth year of this grant. This year, a number of the productions will tour provincially, nationally and internationally. **Commissioning grants** include: **Centaur Theatre Company/Volcano Theatre-** *A Movable Beast*, by Ross Manson; **Geordie Productions-** *Jabber*, by Marcus Youssef (Production grant as well); **Tashme Productions-** *The TASHME Project*, by Julie Tamiko Manning; **Teesri Duniya Theatre-** *Unfaithful Bride*, by Rahul Varma and **Voyageurs Immobile-** *Géographies de la mémoire*, by Andr ea Ubal, Catherine Ruel and

Milena Buziak. **Production grant** awards go to: **Black Theatre Workshop-** *Harlem Duet*, by Djanet Sears; **DynamO Theatre-** *La Ruelle*, by Robert Dion; **Espace Libre-** *Outrages ordinaires*, by various playwrights; **Metachroma Theatre-** *Richard III*, by William Shakespeare; **Segal Centre/Mopo Cultural Trust-** *Waiting for the Barbarians*, adaptation by Alexandre Marine; **Teesri Duniya Theatre** – *Where the Blood Mixes*, by Kevin Loring; **Théâtre Aux Écuries-** *L'histoire de la dramaturgie québécoise des années 60 à nos jours*, various playwrights; and **Théâtre La Chapelle-** *One (Un)*, by Mani Soleymanlou.

Theatre companies concur- invaluable support!

Roy Surette, Artistic Director, **Centaur Theatre Company**, is excited for the opportunity to work with an important Canadian Theatre company, "We are very happy to support Volcano Theatre, one of Canada's most innovative independent companies and their development of an original work being created by an amazing group of culturally diverse artists. Inspired by Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, *A Movable Beast* explores human-ness through-out the last 100 years and will be a dynamic mix of song, imagery and animation. For **Dean Fleming**, AD of **Geordie Productions**, receiving the *Intercultural Conversations* grant was instrumental, allowing the commission of an important play that will tour for eight months next season, "We live in a very complicated world right now and we have to speak about so much to our youth. Without grants like this it is much harder to create new stories that represent our world today. The Cole Foundation is helping theatre companies all over Montreal create theatre that is pertinent to the world we are living in." **Philippe Ducros**, Artistic Director of **Espace Libre**, was able to bring *Outrages Ordinaires* to Montreal. "This Swiss project challenges the boundaries of art and countries. Just as illegal migrants, who are at the heart of this powerful work, because of the contribution of the Cole Foundation we briefly achieved our dream of a world where not only goods have freedom of movement, but also art, ideas and the notion of citizenship." **Rahul Varma**, AD of **Teesri Duniya Theatre** sees the Cole Foundation as supporting theatre projects that set in motion the coming together of people of different cultures to enjoy arts and to engage in intercultural conversation. He underlines the value of that, "No culture can hope to survive if it attempts to exist exclusively, especially in Canada, which is home to so many cultures, languages, races and religions." For **Quincy Armorer**, Artistic Director of **Black Theatre Workshop**, the Cole Foundation's ongoing support is crucial, "Our fall 2012 production of *Harlem Duet* by Djanet Sears would not be possible without this generous contribution. We are honoured to have received an *Intercultural Conversations* grant." For **Pierre Leclerc**, Director General of **DynamO Théâtre**, monies will be devoted to the creation of a new work for young audiences. "*La Ruelle* is part of the artistic mandate of our company; acrobatic movement theater. The show will explore a new form of 'parkour', the art of urban travel. With the Cole Foundation grant, several activities with youth

in a culturally diverse neighborhood will enrich the whole creative process.” Located in the multi-ethnic district, Villeray, **Théâtre Aux Écuries** is a neighborhood theater whose mandate is cultural understanding as a vehicle for social harmony. This from **Mayi-Eder Inchauspé**: “Théâtre Aux Écuries aspires to be a link between culture and cultural communities in Quebec. The contribution of the Cole Foundation encourages dialogue between citizens, artists and theatrical works.” **Metachroma Theatre** is grateful to the Cole Foundation for its support of their inaugural production, William Shakespeare's *Richard III*. “The *Intercultural Conversations* program gives us the opportunity to take our mandate from the page to the stage. The path to our company's success includes our ability to open up conversation about racial diversity on stage, whether it is culturally contextualized or not, traditional or non-traditional, in order to open doors that have previously been closed. This from Milena Buziak, **Voyageurs Immobiles**, “*Géographies de la mémoire* brings together the unique universe of three women from different cultures, transporting the audience through the ages and continents, from Quebec to Japan, Chile to Poland and World War I to the Chilean coup d'état. This creation/staged-reading process, made possible by the Cole Foundation, helps clarify and strengthen our mandate.”

The *Intercultural Conversations – Conversations Interculturelles* program was established to promote cultural bridging that fosters knowledge and tolerance of our social realities. Grants for the next competition relate to shows starting March 1 for the 2013-14 and 2014-15 theatre seasons. The deadline for the fifth competition of the award is October 5, 2012. Theatre companies interested in applying for a grant should download the necessary application forms from the Cole Foundation's web site at: www.colefoundation.ca/community.

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If you would like to interview Barry Cole, Cole Foundation President-
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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 12 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.