



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 vital grant money for their upcoming seasons

MONTREAL, March 2013 - The **Cole Foundation** is pleased to announce the latest grants for the ***Intercultural Conversations-Conversations Interculturelles*** program. These awards, totalling \$207,060, were given to professional theatre companies in Montreal for their 2012-2013-2014 seasons. For the Cole Foundation, dialogue between the various cultures in Montreal is the focus of their community program of grants. The largest initiative is the *Intercultural Conversations-Conversations Interculturelles* theatre program, established to encourage dialogue between the diverse cultural communities in Montreal and also with the minority Anglophone and the majority Francophone communities. There are three types of intercultural dialogue considered: plays with more than one cultural community in them in dialogue; plays with only one cultural community in them- in this case the dialogue is with the audience; and plays that show the uniqueness of the French or English Quebec communities translated into the other language.

For this season's competition, there were fewer applications submitted than in the past. The Cole Foundation received 32 applications from 26 companies- 10 English, 14 French, one company that performed in both French and English and a mime company. Contrary to last year's numbers, there were more French companies than English ones applying, but still not in the proportion of their numbers in Montreal. Four applications were for commissioned plays, 4 applications were for translations and 24 applications were for production grants. Six companies specialize in theatre for young audiences. A panel of Montreal theatre professionals adjudicated the applications.

The Cole Foundation bestows a necessary and notable grant for Montreal companies, some of which receive little funding. **Barry Cole**, President of the Cole Foundation, has noticed that over the past 5 years, many of the same theatre companies have consistently approached us, "I'm a bit worried about how crucial this grant is to a number of companies who really depend on it. However, I'm pleased with the increase in French companies applying- we see this as some success in that more theatres are beginning to show diverse cultures on stage, which is our goal."

Cole would like nothing more than to see a rise in the overall number of applications, “We’re interested in funding more companies than we do at present and are prepared to spend more money to encourage the development and support of this type of theatre.” For Cole, to see high quality theatre continue evolving is very inspiring, “It’s exciting to see Teesri Duniya remount a renewed and further developed production of their acclaimed show, *Bhopal*. I’m also looking forward to Geordie Productions’ *Jabber* being offered in French to a whole new group of youth. As well, Théâtre Décalage’s Chinese themed *Le Dragon d’Or* is a great choice for intercultural conversation.”

Awarded companies

Fourteen theatre companies are recipients of the fifth year of this grant. This year, a number of the productions will tour local schools, as well as provincially. **Commissioning grants** include: **Les Indisciplinaires** - *Tragédie chilienne en trois actes*, by Marcela Pizarro; **Teesri Duniya Theatre**- *The Encounters Project*, by Rachael Van Fossen; **Théâtre Aux Écuries**- *Polyglot*, by various artists (Production grant as well); and **Théâtre I.N.K.**- *Lignedebus*, by Marilyn Perreault. **Production grant** awards go to: **Black Theatre Workshop**- *Sal Capone: The Lamentable Tragedy of*, by Omari Newton, and *The Meeting*, by Jeff Stetson; **Centaur Theatre**- *St. Leonard Chronicles*, by Steve Galluccio; **Espace Libre**- *La Dernière Interview*, by Catherine Boskowitz; **Imago Theatre**- *Thinking of Yu*, by Carole Fréchette; **Singulier Pluriel**- *Soledad (L’Improvisatrice)* by Julie Vincent; **Tableau D’Hote Theatre**- *The Story of Sedna*, by Jessica Abdallah; **Talisman Theatre**- *The Aeneid*, by Olivier Kemeid (plus development); **Teesri Duniya Theatre**- *Bhopal*, by Rahul Varma; **Théâtre Décalage**- *Le Dragon d’Or*, by Roland Schimmelpfennig; and **Théâtre Motus**- *Elisapie et les aurores boréales*, by Robbie Watt. Added to this last application was a private donation from the Foundation of Greater Montreal, earmarked for the development of a theatre for young audiences production.

Theatre companies speak to the Foundation’s support...

For **Rahul Varma**, Artistic Director, **Teesri Duniya Theatre**, the *Intercultural Conversations* program is among the most progressive programs helping the arts, because it acknowledges Canada as a beautiful mosaic of different cultures, races, beliefs, yearnings and hopes, “With the help of the *Intercultural Conversations* program, we have brought to the fore voices that were previously ignored by the mainstream. The Foundation’s support has helped our stage look like our country.” **Clare Schapiro**, AD of **Imago Theatre**, is grateful for the Cole Foundation’s support of their upcoming production, Carole Fréchette’s *Thinking of Yu*, a play that compels people to question their beliefs and open their minds to other perspectives. “We are not only continuing our tradition of collaboration between the French and English communities, but broadening our exchange to include actors from other cultures, along with audiences that reflect the true nature of our city and contemporary society.” For **Mayi-Eder Inchauspé**, General Manager, **Théâtre Aux Écuries**, the Foundation’s support for *Polyglot* will help create a show based on the new faces of Quebec identity in collaboration with people

from the different communities that live in Villeray, where the theatre is located. “These participants will be fully involved creatively, since their history, experience and views will be central to the development of the piece.” This from **Mireille Camier**, **Théâtre Décalage**: “The Cole Foundation’s contribution allows us to deepen our research for our show, *Le Dragon d’Or*, and encourage exchange. In addition, it helps us develop a diverse audience and makes it possible for us to offer discussions after the show.” For **Hélène Legault**, Communications Director, **Espace Libre**, thanks to the generosity of the Cole Foundation the theatre is fortunate to host *La Dernière Interview* from France, starring Congolese playwright and actor Dieudonné Niangouna. “The arrival of this show is an opportunity for Espace Libre to understand the richness of contemporary theater practices in Africa. The week also includes special activities with the local Black community and neighbourhood organizations.”

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 2014-15 and 2015-16 theatre seasons. The deadline for the sixth competition of the award is October 4, 2013. 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/competition-forms.

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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 13 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.