



Intercultural Conversations–Conversations interculturelles
Encouraging theatrical dialogue between the various cultures in Montreal

MONTREAL, February 2021 – The pandemic has caused great disruption in the theatre community. Yet, with ever-present hope for the light at the end of the tunnel, and encouraged by museums opening and ongoing film and television production in the city, Montreal theatre companies in all their diversity have again risen to the occasion and persevered. The community is grateful that the [*Intercultural Conversations-Conversations Interculturelles*](#) (IC-CI) program continues to sustain local productions in such uncertain times.

Cole Foundation President and Chairman **Barry Cole** is proud to announce the latest round of grant winners. “Local theatre practitioners are interested in getting back on board, offering new productions with latent optimism that things will turn around. We want to continue supporting that enthusiasm,” said Cole. The theatre program was started to motivate the creation of professional theatre that features intercultural dialogue including themes and issues surrounding inclusion and racial diversity. For the recent competition, 13 companies were given 14 crucial grants to bolster diverse theatrical stories in Greater Montreal, for a total of **\$197,500** for the 1921-22 season, as well as added funding for post-show audience talkbacks to continue the conversation initiated in the play.

Determination and creativity illuminate our collective contemporary reality

Play submissions encompass a widespread range of cultures and social realities. Embracing these trying circumstances, companies have also shown innovation in their attempts to ‘COVID-proof’ their productions. On offer is a podcast adaptation where the text is front and centre as the cast questions culture, religion, spirituality, ritual and belief, and another has couples from different cultures and religions separated by glass, sharing their early love stories and highlighting the current absent human contact of our loved ones. Styles and inspirations include drama, physical theatre, comedy, and children’s theatre. Anticipated works, written by emerging and established playwrights, share themes and ideas about African countries and the diaspora, youth-led movements, biracial and Afro-Indigenous identity, eating together, discovering and reconstructing one’s Jewish parentage, the stigma towards disabled communities, finding hope in obscurity, Indigenous slaves in Quebec, first and second generation immigrants, shattering Asian women stereotypes, and local lingo and slang from various Montreal neighbourhoods’ cultures and languages.

Recipients of the latest competition

The Foundation’s encouragement is palpable. “This support is particularly meaningful as it breathes life into the development of this new creation during a period in which the performing arts face unprecedented challenges. We are honoured to be recipients of the *Intercultural Conversations* grant,” said **Michael Toppings**, Artistic Director of MAI (Montréal, arts interculturels). This from **Simon Boudreault**, Artistic Director, Simoniaques Théâtre, “In these

uncertain times, the Cole Foundation is a salutary breath that allows our creative sails to swell. Thanks to this confidence, we can continue to carry out exciting and unifying projects.” “In this period marked by important issues of inclusion, *Intercultural Conversations* is of undeniable relevance. Also addressed is the impact of the global health crisis on the arts community and our collective future,” said **David Lavoie**, Co- Executive Director of Festival TransAmériques. “The Cole Foundation has emboldened our pursuit to challenge dominant historical narratives and unearth the buried stories of the nations that make up the country we now call Canada. Their commitment has allowed the company to introduce what we are certain will become a seminal work of the modern Canadian theatre canon and to engage in deep conversations about what it means for our collective past, present and future,” said **Mathieu Murphy-Perron**, Artistic Director of Tableau D’Hôte Theatre. For **Dean Patrick Fleming**, Artistic Director of Professional Theatre at Hudson Village Theatre, “The Cole Foundation has done so much to enhance the discussions the theatre has been having with our audiences, our communities, our stakeholders and the public in general. It will help us continue the journey we are on to make conversations about the diversity of our society become part of the core of who we are and what we do.” **Geoffrey Gaquère**, Artistic Director for Espace Libre said, “It is with great joy that we learned of the Cole Foundation’s support for this work giving voice to Afro-Indigenous women’s stories. The Foundation once again enables us to mobilize resources aimed at intercultural dialogue.” Added Marilyn Perreault, Co-Artistic Director, Théâtre I.N.K., “By supporting us in this new series, the Cole Foundation allows people to share their love stories, and artists to nourish their creativity; a great way to get through the end of this pandemic.”

COMMISSIONING grants include: **Black Theatre Workshop**- *Pirate and the Lone Voice* by Donna-Michelle St. Bernard; **Espace Libre** - *White Wash* by various writers; and **MAI (Montréal, arts interculturels) & Boulouki Theatre**- *the future is another country* by Manolis Antoniou.

PRODUCTION grant awards go to: **Festival TransAmériques** - *Jukebox Montréal* by Joris Lacoste et Élise Simonet; **Hudson Village Theatre** - *Strawberries in January* by Evelyne de la Chenelière; **Orange Noyée**- *Mille*, Olivier Kemeid; **Productions Ondinnok**- *L’Enclos de Wabush* by Louis-Karl Picard-Siouï; **Productions Onishka-Marguerite** by Émilie Monnet; **Simoniques Théâtre**- podcast adaption of *Comment je suis devenu musulman* by Simon Boudreault; **Surreal SoReal Theatre** in collaboration with **Geordie Theatre**- *Jonathan : La figure du Goéland* by John Lachlan Stewart; **Tableau D’Hôte Theatre**- *Mizushobai* by Julie Tamiko Manning; and **Théâtre I.N.K.**- *Duos en vitrine* by Marilyn Perreault and company.

TRANSLATION grant for **Black Theatre Workshop**- *Simone Half and Half* by Christine Rodriguez.

There are two annual *Intercultural Conversations* grants, in October and April. The deadline for the next competition of the award is Friday, April 2, 2021 at 5:00pm. Theatre companies interested in applying for a grant can download the necessary application forms and information from the Cole Foundation’s web site at:

www.colefoundation.ca/en/programmes/intercultural-conversations/