



## The Cole Foundation: Intercultural Conversations

### Description

# Heading into its 10th year encouraging theatrical dialogue between the various cultures in Montreal

#### PRESS-RELEASE

The **Cole Foundation** is pleased to announce the latest grant winners for the Intercultural [Conversations- Conversations Interculturelles](#) (IC-CI) programme, initiated to encourage greater understanding of Montreal's cultural mosaic by having audiences enjoy professional plays that present stories and issues of cultural minorities on stage. Focusing on intercultural and multicultural conversation for their community initiatives, over the past nine years the Cole Foundation has cultivated and strengthened a catalogue of theatrical work incorporating themes of diversity, inclusion and dialogue. This year \$419,140 was awarded, the highest amount of grant money since the IC-CI programme's inception.

Be the change you want to see happen.

Educator, Arleen Lorraine



Cole Foundation President and Chairman, Barry Cole

The number of applications in 2017 increased by 18% over those received last year, indicating the mounting prominence of the programme and greater interest in the issues of cultural diversity.

More commissioning and creation grants were awarded this year than any year previous. “Companies are generating the literature; if suitable plays addressing diversity don’t exist, they create them. The idea of an intercultural element is now at the forefront of dozens of Quebec theatre seasons. As well, the quality of the submissions is elevated so more are being approved,” said Cole Foundation President and Chairman, **Barry Cole**.

Heading into the 10th year of this invaluable program, Cole asked the companies what impact Intercultural Conversations has had on Quebec’s theatrical landscape. From **Rahul Varma**, artistic director of *Teesri Duniya Theatre*: “Teesri Duniya Theatre has been culturally diverse since its inception. However, never before have we felt more validated in our choices of plays we have produced through the patronage of the Cole Foundation.

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Directly, as a result of the Foundation’s support, Montreal stages are heterogeneous and colourful like never before.” **Hélène Ducharme**, *Théâtre Motus* artistic director, was quick to answer, “Without a doubt the Cole

Foundation has changed the theatrical landscape—we are finally talking about diversity in Quebec and hopefully ignoring it is now in the past. Until very recently we were far behind the work that theatre and other artistic communities outside Quebec were already doing.” *Centaur Theatre’s* Artistic Director **Eda Holmes** said a number of scripts could not have been considered 10 years ago because the feeling was their audiences were not ready, “With the help of these grants to mitigate risk, we have been able to push the diversity envelope in a variety of ways. This shift can be seen not only at *Centaur Theatre* but at many of the companies who produce diverse work successfully in Montreal.”

The IC-CI grants allow theatre companies to get to the heart of the matter and reflect our world. This from **Philippe Ducros**, *Hôtel-Motel* artistic director: “In this era of building walls instead of building bridges, the Cole Foundation’s mission is more urgent than ever. Thanks to the Foundation we have been able to meet people marginalized by their culture or origin, but who form the fabric of our societies as much as anyone. The resulting artistic and human dialogue is inestimable.”

‘... we are finally talking about diversity in Quebec and hopefully ignoring it is now in the past.’

**Sophie Gee** is the artistic director of *Nervous Hunter*: “This grant is a large part of why we are starting to see theatre that more accurately reflects the cultural make-up of our society. Artistic directors are making different choices now—no one wants to just tell white people’s stories; diverse stories are beginning to hold public value and interest. But it’s a slow change. Companies are now interested in work by people of colour but there has to be front-end investment to develop these voices in Quebec, including playwrights and directors of colour.”



Segal Centre for Performing Arts – *Master Harold and the Boys*, by Athol Fugard

For the grants, there are three types of intercultural dialogue considered: plays with more than one cultural



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community in dialogue; plays with only one cultural community- 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.

### **This year's awarded shows**

The plays encompass a widespread range of cultures and the varied communities within them, with anticipated works examining discriminatory immigration policies and immigrant children being raised in a new society; demystifying stereotypes about Black men and mental health; race, homosexuality and bullying; the colonization of Indigenous territory and thought; shame found in marginalised communities; the current crisis in Venezuela; the role of women in Anishinabeg culture; Palestinian-Israeli conflict told through mysticism and absurd humour; a Siberian hermit escaping religious persecution; and South African apartheid, all told in a variety of performance styles including comedy, drama, multimedia, dance and spoken-word.

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### **COMMISSIONING grants**

**Black Theatre Workshop** – *Dear Black Man* by Kym Dominique-Ferguson ; **Geordie Productions** – *How I Got My Home* by Harry Standjofski ; **Odd Stumble** – *Elsewhere* by Joy Ross- Jones ; **Tableau D'Hôte Theatre** – *Mizushobai* by Julie Tamiko Manning (also received a translation grant) ; and **Théâtre à corps perdus** – *je ne sais pas si je vais revenir*.

### **PRODUCTION grant awards**



Black Theatre Workshop – *Angélique*, by Lorena Gale

**Black Theatre Workshop** – *How Black Mothers Say I Love You* by Trey Anthony, and *Black and Blue Matters* by Omari Newton; **Centaur Theatre** – *Choir Boy* by Tarell Alvin McCraney (also received a commissioning grant); **Espace Libre** – *Black Boys* by Saga Collective (also received a translation grant); **Geordie** – *Radical* by Marcus Youssef, and *Reaching for Starlight* by Donna- Michelle St. Bernard; **Joe Jack et John** – *Violette 360* by Amélie Dumoulin (also received a commissioning grant); **Les productions Hôtel-Motel** – *La cartomancie du territoire* by Philippe Ducros; **Nervous Hunter** – *Lévriers* by Sophie Gee (also received a commissioning grant); **Productions Onishka** – *Okinum* by Émilie Monnet (also received a commissioning grant); **Pas de Panique** – *La maison aux 67 langues* by Jonathan Garfinkel; **Porte Parole** – *Fredy* by Annabel Soutar (also received a translation grant); **Repercussion Theatre** – *Whisper* by Jeff Ho (also received a commissioning grant); **Scapegoat Carnivale Theatre** – *Yev* by Alison Darcy and Joseph Schragge; **Segal Centre for Performing Arts** – *Master Harold and the Boys* by Athol Fugard; **Simoniaques Théâtre** – *Comment je suis devenu musulman* by Simon Boudreault (also received a commissioning grant); **Théâtre Teesri Duniya** – *Là où le sang se mêle* by Kevin Loring; and **Théâtre Motus** – *La traverse des continents*, by collective creation (also received a commissioning grant).

## TRANSLATION grants

**Black Theatre Workshop** – *Angélique* by Lorena Gale; and **Joe Jack et John** – *Dis merci* by Penelope Bourque.

Barry Cole is enthusiastic about the steady rise of the program, “The Cole Foundation is happy to respond to the added interest by putting more money into this important cause.” Thirty-nine companies applied (21 French, 17 English and 1 First Nations French-language) with 34 grants awarded to 19 companies. This 47% success rate



endows more money than most federal/provincial funding.

Grants for the next competition relate to shows starting March 1, 2018 and for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 theatre seasons. The deadline for the next competition of the award is Sept. 29, 2018. Theatre companies interested in applying for a grant will be able to download the necessary application forms and information from the [Community/competition-forms](#).

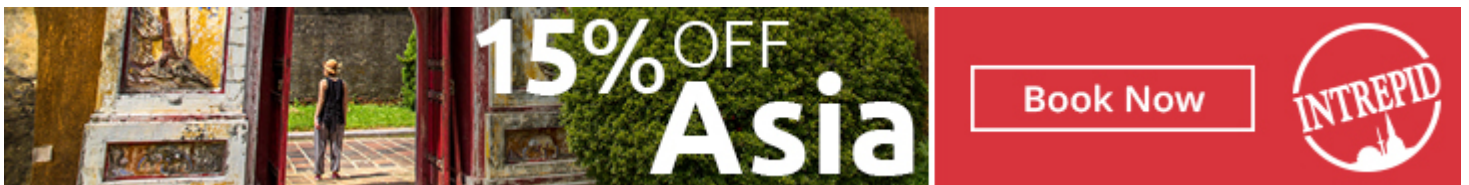
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*The Cole Foundation is a private family foundation based in Montreal, initiated in 1980 by the late J. N. (Jack) Cole, a Montreal businessman and philanthropist. It supports research in pediatric leukemia and related diseases, as well as a program 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.*



### Category

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2. communiqué
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### Tags

1. Barry Cole
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