

13 companies | 14 crucial grants | \$225,000 to support diverse theatrical stories in Quebec



**Intercultural Conversations–Conversations Interculturelles grant program
Encouraging theatrical dialogue between the various cultures in Montreal**

Celebrating 15 years of crucial conversation

MONTREAL, March 2024 – Twice a year the Cole Foundation’s [Intercultural Conversations-Conversations Interculturelles](#) (IC-CI) program disperses hundreds of thousands of dollars to support professional Montreal theatre companies to produce, commission and translate plays that show diversity on stage. This encourages greater understanding of Montreal’s intercultural reality by having audiences both learn about and see their stories presented. For the recent fall competition, 13 deserving companies were given instrumental grants for a total of \$225,000 for the 2024-25 season, as well as added funding for post-show audience talkbacks to continue the conversation initiated in the production.

Over the past fifteen years the Cole Foundation has cultivated and strengthened a catalogue of theatrical work incorporating themes of inclusion and dialogue. “It is a privilege to support the creation of work that features diverse cultures, including racial, ethnic and religious viewpoints,” said Cole Foundation President and Chairman, **Barry Cole**. “The IC-CI grant is founded on the idea that expansion of a community’s world view is an invaluable principle.”

An ever-growing creative and timely focus on diversity

The foundation was delighted to see that this round of grants received an increase in play submissions including a number of newcomers to the competition, offering a widespread range of ideas, cultures and identities. Many of the issues are topical and current, taking things from the news to the theatre. Anticipated works by both emerging and awarded playwrights range from intimate solo performances to stage-filled spectacles. Upcoming season’s audiences will be presented with works of honesty, humour, history and heartbreak. Plays include theatrical styles and themes that are truth-based, sci-fi/fantasy inspired and literary adaptations, among others. Theatre-goers are offered a wide intercultural choice for youth and adults including: a socio-political satire exploring stereotypes including pre-conceived ideas about Black women’s bodies; similarities and shortcomings between refugees and locals; visiting faraway unknown family and culture shock; the quest to answer, ‘Where are you from?’; the naivety of young ‘good girls’; inhabitants of a living room evolving over generations; a talented Black musical entertainer overcoming racially-divided hostilities; an adaptation of Nobel Prize-winning testimonies from forty years of travel; an actor pondering the parallels of his fight for dignity and recognition, and that of his latest role; and captivating scripts about the fight for access to water, Indigenous creation myths, and the destruction of natural resources. The shows highlight contemporary Quebec issues via the Congo (DRC), previously-named USSR, USA, Martinique, Iran, Ivory Coast, Turkey, Colombia, Indigenous peoples (including Anishnaabeg, Inga, Wendat) and Burundi.

Recipients of the latest competition

Intercultural Conversations-Conversations Interculturelles grants encourage Montreal companies to offer diverse, cross-cultural shared experiences by telling impactful narratives. “With this show, we offer an outstretched hand towards ‘the other’—the Cole Foundation instills in us the freedom and confidence to do so according to our convictions,” said **Dany Boudreault**, co-artistic director, La Messe Basse. “The Cole Foundation's Intercultural Conversations/Conversations Interculturelles grant makes it possible for us to support new work by Black Canadian writers, and open up conversations for cultural exchange and understanding, while proudly contributing to the national theatre ecology in a meaningful way with longstanding impact,” said **Dian Marie Bridge**, Black Theatre Workshop Artistic Director. “We have spent so many hours researching archives and interviewing family members and can now weave all this trove of information into a script that will be a precious tool in understanding who we are as Wendats. The Cole Foundation has proven to be an exceptional ally in allowing Indigenous dramaturgy and storytelling to grow in Tio-tia-ke,” said Productions Menuentakuan Artistic Director **Charles Bender**. From **Mani Soleymanlou**, artistic director of Orange Noyée, “Since 2012, with the support of the Cole Foundation, we have tried to tell the story of Montreal in all its diversity, to reach out to all Montrealers regardless of their origins. The foundation is an invaluable and irreplaceable partner.”

COMMISSIONING grants are: **Geordie Productions-** *Nikanihk* by Todd Houseman; **Productions Menuentakuan-** *Yahndawa*; *Ce que nous sommes* by Marie-Josée Bastien; **Système Kangourou-** *Paysages en filiation* by Claudine Robillard and Anne-Marie Guilmaine; and **Théâtre UBU Inc.-** *Chronologies* by Stephie Mazunya.

PRODUCTION grant awards go to: **Productions Onishka-** *Nigamon/Tunai* by Émilie Monnet and Waira Nina; **Black Theatre Workshop-** *Diggers* by Donna-Michelle St.Bernard, and *Vierge* by Rachel Mutombo; **Festival TransAmériques-** *Carte noire nommé désir* by Rebecca Chaillon; **La Messe Basse-** *Sur les traces* by Dany Boudreault and Gurshad Shaheman; **Lara Kramer Danse-** *Rétrospective Lara Kramer Windigo + Them Voices*; **Orange Noyée-** *Il neige sur Abidjan* by Iannicko N'Doua; **Théâtre de la Sentinelle-** *M'appelle Mohammed Ali* by Dieudonné Niangouna; and **Théâtre de Quat'Sous-** *Fin de l'homme rouge* by Svetlana Alexievitch, adapted by Catherine de Léan.

TRANSLATION grant for **Segal Centre for the Performing Arts-** *Josephine: A Musical Cabaret* by Tymisha Harris, Michael Marinaccio and Tod Kimbro.

There are two annual **Intercultural Conversations- Conversations Interculturelles grants**, in October and April. The deadline for the next competition of the award is Friday, March 29, 2024 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/apply-now/

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If you would like to interview Barry Cole, Cole Foundation President, or any of the theatre companies-
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