



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

Celebrating 16 years of crucial conversation

MONTREAL, February 2025– 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. Cole Foundation President Nancy Wells is proud to announce the latest round of grant winners—**13 deserving companies were given instrumental funding for a total of \$174,500 for the 2025-26 season**, as well as added financial aid for post-show audience talkbacks to continue the conversation initiated in the production.

The Cole Foundation has cultivated and strengthened a catalogue of theatrical work incorporating themes of inclusion and dialogue. For this recent competition, the foundation received more applications than ever. “The large number of fall applications reflects the strength and diversity of Montreal’s theatre community. We are proud to support these exceptional projects that promote meaningful dialogue and celebrate multicultural stories. These grants highlight our dedication to funding artistic excellence and building connections across cultures,” said Wells.

Incredible range of Intercultural elements at the forefront of Quebec theatre seasons

Play submissions offer a widespread range of ideas, cultures and identities for youth and adult theatregoers; many of the issues are topical and current. The various shows highlight contemporary Montreal issues via China, USA, Türkiye, Palestine, Guinea-Bissau, Democratic Republic of Congo, Brussels, Egypt, rural Quebec and Iran, as well as Indigenous issues and the Black experience through the ages. The works present a wide variety of theatrical styles that include poetry, video, Indigenous ceremony, linked episodic tales, music, and dance- including breaking and krump. Anticipated works by both emerging and awarded playwrights explore influential scripts through humour, history, recent news, community activism, the power of friendship, shifting power dynamics and strong images. Themes illuminate topics of prolonged occupation, cultural tensions, stereotypes, the moral significance of wampums, healthcare inequities faced by Indigenous children, technology’s impact on our bodies, and realities of indigenous women in prison and their children.

Recipients of the latest competition

Intercultural Conversations-Conversations Interculturelles grants encourage Montreal companies to offer diverse, cross-cultural shared experiences by telling impactful narratives. “In this period of great upheaval in the world and the performing arts community in Quebec, it is reassuring to be able to count on the support of the Cole

Foundation, always sensitive to the well-being of creators,” said **Dany Boudreault**, co-artistic director, La Messe Basse. “We are grateful to the Cole Foundation for making our vision for unconventional political theatre possible; we get to tell this intimate, epic story about how intercultural friendship can become a powerful force of resistance against discrimination and state violence. We use everything from stand-up comedy to puppetry, working outside of western theatre conventions with artists from so many different cultures,” added **Esi Callender**, co-founder, Sort of Productions. For Ondinnok’s General Manager, **Nathalie Delorme**, “The Cole Foundation grant will help us realize an unprecedented artistic collaboration project between three Indigenous theatre companies, to create a collective work that embodies courage and respect. On the occasion of Ondinnok’s 40th anniversary, this project affirms our place in the cultural ecosystem and opens up dialogue with a broad audience, offering an authentic and committed perspective on our reality.” Nervous Hunter’s **Sophie Gee** is grateful to the Cole Foundation, “This important grant ensures that more members of the public, including adolescents, see the show and allows us to pay fair wages for the artists involved in the production. In these difficult times for the performing arts, the foundation’s help is much needed and appreciated.”

COMMISSIONING grants are: **La Compagnie Jean Duceppe- *Les Garçons*** by Nathalie Doummar; **Les Productions Ondinnok**, in collaboration with Menuentakuan Productions, Production AUEN and Productions Onishka- *Wampum / Ce qui nous unit* by Dave Jenniss et Xavier Huard (also production grant); **Production AUEN- *Uashtsheshushkue (Femme bison)*** by Soleil Launière; and **Surreal soReal Theatre- *Welcome to the Digital Desert*** by Charles Gao.

PRODUCTION grant awards go to: **La Messe Basse- *Sur tes traces*** by Dany Boudreault and Gurshad Shaheman; **Black Theatre Workshop- *Pirate and the Lone Voice*** by Donna-Michelle St. Bernard; **Nervous Hunter- *Bonne Bonnes*** by Sophie Gee and Tamara Nguyen; **Theatre de la Sentinelle- *Nzinga*** by Marie- Louise Bibish Mumbu, Alexis Diamond and Tatiana Zinga Botao; **Sometimes Y Theatre- *It’s Time*** by Robert Tsonos; **Teesri Duniya Theatre- *Keffiyeh/Made in China*** by Dalia Taha; **Sort of Productions- *Wine & Halva*** by Deniz Başar; and **Theatre de 4’Sous/Mayday – *Cabaret Noir*** Mélanie Demers.

TRANSLATION grant for **Geordie Theatre- *Jordan*** by Charles Bender.

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 28, 2025 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/

-30-

If you would like to interview Nancy Wells, Cole Foundation President, Barry Cole, Foundation chair, or any of the winning theatre companies - Media Relations: Janis Kirshner, (514) 287-8912, jkirshner@sympatico.ca