

ALBERTA THEATRE PROJECTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THEATRE INNOVATOR AND ALBERTA THEATRE PROJECTS' ARTISTIC DIRECTOR HAYSAM KADRI AWARDED THE 2024 HARRY & MARTHA COHEN AWARD

CALGARY, March 10, 2024 – On March 9, the 2024 Harry and Martha Cohen Award for significant and sustained contribution to theatre in Calgary was awarded to Alberta Theatre Projects' Artistic Director, Haysam Kadri. The award was presented to Kadri in the Martha Cohen Theatre following the penultimate performance of W.O. Mitchell's *The Black Bonspiel of Wullie MacCrimmon* on Saturday, March 9.

The Harry and Martha Cohen Award is presented by Cheryl, Faye, David and Philip Cohen in memory of their parents who were deeply involved in the theatre community. The theatre Alberta Theatre Projects calls home is named for their mother, Martha Cohen, who was a Calgary arts champion and instrumental in spearheading the building of the EPCOR CENTRE for the Performing Arts (now Arts Commons).

Award recipients set the bar in terms of their passion and commitment to Calgary theatre community, and may be leaders onstage, offstage or backstage; actors, directors, playwrights, designers, administrators, philanthropists, dramaturgs, managers, teachers, technicians or volunteers.

The award, first presented in 1986, has been on hiatus since 2019. "The city clearly missed the award, as there were an unprecedented number of nominations. The pool was deep; there are so many worthy people in our vibrant, exciting theatre community," said Kathryn Kerbes, Chair of the Award Committee. "But Haysam's immeasurable contributions to the community, enormous impact on the organizations he's led, and ability to inspire the theatre-makers around him made him a stand-out to receive this year's award."

2019 award recipient, Denise Clarke (who presented Kadri with his award) said, "Being asked to introduce the recipient of this award is its own small honour. This year's recipient is truly the perfect person; fun, smart, an exceptionally talented artist and all-round theatre whiz plus a human being par excellence, so ... check, check check!" Adding, "In these tough times, the Cohen Award is an encouraging and generous acknowledgment. Cheers to the Foundation!"

The nomination package submitted for Kadri included letters of support from theatre makers locally, across Canada and internationally.

Words and phrases used consistently when describing Haysam include: talent, commitment, professionalism, integrity, visionary, inspiring, trailblazer, inclusive, intelligent, passionate, compassionate, teacher, coach, mentor, dauntless leader, loves with all his heart.

"I'm deeply honored to receive the Harry and Martha Cohen Award," says Kadri. "Theatre is about collaboration, and this recognition highlights the teamwork and dedication in Calgary's theatre community. I believe in the power of storytelling and its impact on our shared human experience. This award motivates me to keep striving for excellence, and to continue contributing to the legacy of the Cohen family in our theatre community."

PREVIOUS HARRY AND MARTHA COHEN AWARD RECIPIENTS

Betty Gibb
Grant Reddick
Margaret Bard and Bartley Bard
Joyce Doolittle
Georgie Collins
Blake Brooker and Michael Green

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D. Michael Dobbin
Marilyn Potts
Fred Scott
JoAnne James
Duval Lang
Gillian Dalton
Hal Kerbes and Kathryn Kerbes
Sharon Pollock
David LeReaney
Bob White
Jock Osler
John Murrell
Valerie Ann Pearson
Dianne Goodman
Clarice Evans
Lynn DuFort
Stephen Hair
Doug Curtis
Patricia Benedict
Mark Bellamy
Patti Pon
Patricia Moore and Sherrold Moore
Kevin McKendrick
Terry Gunvordahl
Carol Dann
Christopher Hunt
Denise Clarke

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About Alberta Theatre Projects:

We create world-class contemporary theatre in Calgary from our home in the Martha Cohen Theatre. We are a national leader in new play development. Programming is selected from the finest Canadian and international plays driven by the collision of diverging ideas, points of view, class, gender or cultural perspectives. Our productions radically explore our space, blurring the line between the audience and the artist through multiple seating configurations each season.

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