

MEDIA RELEASE
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BILL MILLERD WINS HERBERT WHITTAKER AWARD FOR DISTINGUISHED CONTRIBUTION TO CANADIAN THEATRE

VANCOUVER, B.C.—In his final season as Artistic Managing Director of the Arts Club Theatre Company, **Bill Millerd** was recently named the 2017 recipient of the **Herbert Whittaker Award** for Distinguished Contribution to Canadian Theatre.

On receiving this prestigious award, Millerd says, “Herbert Whittaker set a high mark for theatrical criticism and I am honoured to receive an award in his name.”

The Herbert Whittaker/Canadian Theatre Critics Association (CTCA) Award, named after a founder of the Toronto Drama Bench and Critic Emeritus of *The Globe and Mail*, is bestowed biennially. The award dates to the mid-1970s, and past recipients include Tomson Highway, Judith Thompson, Jackie Maxwell, Ronnie Burkett, Robert Lepage, Brent Carver, and Joy Coghill.

CTCA board member **Malcolm Page**, the veteran Vancouver theatre critic who nominated Millerd, praised Millerd for combining vision and practicality. “He has cleverly educated his mainstream audiences till they are ready for more serious drama,” said Page, also pointing out Millerd’s record for nurturing theatre artists, from Morris Panych to Anosh Irani.

“It’s a great pleasure to see Bill Millerd receive the Whittaker Award,” added CTCA President **Martin Morrow**. “Over the years, Mr. Millerd has made the Arts Club the mainstay of Vancouver’s theatre scene, and he’s done it with a canny mix of commercial instincts and creative risk-taking.”

The award includes a donation by the CTCA to a charity of the winner’s choice; Millerd has selected the new **Bill Millerd Artist Fund** as the beneficiary.

THE BILL MILLERD ARTIST FUND

Marking the end of a 46-year career at the helm of the Arts Club, Millerd has announced the creation of the Bill Millerd Artist Fund.

The fund seeks to provide artists of all kinds—costume designers, directors, actors, playwrights, stage managers—with a scholarship to hone their craft, push boundaries, and further their skills.

On the importance of this endowment fund, Millerd says, “We know that theatre depends on artists developing their craft and on the kind of new voices that we want to have on our stages. Setting up this fund goes a long way towards ensuring that future.”

From now until November 30, each donation to the fund will be matched by the Department of Canadian Heritage.

To support the fund, the Arts Club will present ***To Bill, with Love***, a tribute performance on Sunday, March 4, to celebrate Millerd’s career and revisit many of his achievements. Directed by Arts Club veteran **Valerie Easton** (*Bittergirl: The Musical*) and written by **Deborah Williams** of the Mom’s the Word Collective, this performance will feature musical numbers, special guests, and more.

ABOUT BILL MILLERD

Since 1972, Bill Millerd has been the Artistic Managing Director of Vancouver's Arts Club Theatre Company. During his time with the company, Millerd has expanded its operations to include year-round programming and regional and national tours. Millerd oversaw the construction of four theatres: the Granville Island Stage, in 1979; the Revue Stage, in 1983; the reopening of the historic Stanley Theatre (now the Stanley Industrial Alliance Stage), in 1998; and the Goldcorp Stage at the BMO Theatre Centre, in 2015. During his Arts Club tenure, 600 plays have been produced, over 100 of which Millerd directed. Under Millerd's leadership, the company has staged over 120 Canadian works, including more than 80 premieres.

Millerd is a Governor of the National Theatre School of Canada, and has received a Jessie Award for Career Achievement, the Mayor's Arts Award, and the Herbert Whittaker Award for Distinguished Contribution to Canadian Theatre. In 1993, he was appointed as a member of the Order of Canada for his contributions to enriching the cultural community of Canada. He has been awarded an Alumni Award of Distinction and an honorary Doctor of Letters degree from the University of British Columbia, and was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award from Tourism Vancouver.

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ABOUT THE ARTS CLUB

The Arts Club Theatre Company, founded in 1964, is Canada's largest not-for-profit urban theatre company. Led by Artistic Managing Director Bill Millerd, Incoming Artistic Director Ashlie Corcoran, and Executive Director Peter Cathie White, it offers professional theatre at three venues—the Stanley Industrial Alliance Stage, Granville Island Stage, and the Goldcorp Stage at the BMO Theatre Centre—as well as on tour throughout the province.

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