



PRESS RELEASE

## **The KCICA Gold Medals in the Arts Ceremony took place in Cape Town This Saturday**

*Cape Town, April 14, 2018 - Karel and Stephanie Komárek, co-chairs of the Kennedy Center International Committee in the Arts recognized outstanding contributors to South African culture with the Kennedy Center Gold Medal in the Arts. The six artists who were presented the Medal are a diverse representation of outstanding artists in South Africa. The ceremony took place on Saturday, April 14 at the Zeitz Museum of Modern Art in Cape Town, South Africa.*

*"The culture of South Africa is known for its rich and unique blend of ethnic and cultural diversity. South Africa is also known for its stellar art scene. Stephanie and I are honored to represent the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the national cultural center of the United States and living memorial to President John F. Kennedy and recognize some of South African greatest artists." says Karel Komárek.*

The Kennedy Center Gold Medal in the Arts is an award given annually to performers and arts leaders in the international community. This year they have been presented to: Basil J.R. Jones and Adrian P. Kohler of the Handspring Puppet Company, actor John Kani, the "First Lady of African Song" Sibongile Khumalo, exuberant storyteller Gcina Mhlophe and McCoy Mrubata, an accomplished saxophonist, collaborator, and bandleader.

The Kennedy Center International Committee on the Arts proudly bestows the Gold Medal in the Arts in recognition of extraordinary achievement in the arts each year at its international summit. The Committee awards inspiring individuals, whose lifetime achievements have created, nurtured, supported, and championed the world's greatest arts and artists.

### **About the Kennedy Center International Committee on the Arts**

The Kennedy Center International Committee on the Arts (KCICA) was established in 2001 to support international programming at the Center, as well as to encourage global exchange in the arts. KCICA members are passionate performing arts enthusiasts and are among the Kennedy Center's most philanthropic contributors.

The Kennedy Center frequently presents large-scale, highly acclaimed international festivals, further promoting intercultural dialogue and bringing international cultures to Washington. The KCICA plays an instrumental role in supporting these showcases. Karel and Stephanie Komárek became the Co-Chairs of the KCICA in December 2017.

## **About the Kennedy Center**

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is the national cultural center of the United States and the living memorial to President John F. Kennedy. The nine theaters and stages attract more than three million visitors to more than 2,000 performances each year, while Center-related touring productions, television, and radio broadcasts reach 40 million more around the world.

The Center produces and presents performances of music, dance, comedy, and theater, supports artists in the creation of new work, and serves the nation as a leader in arts education. With its artistic affiliates, the National Symphony Orchestra and the Washington National Opera, the Center has produced more than 300 theatrical productions and dozens of new ballets, operas, and musical works, in addition to hosting numerous international festivals.

## **Appendix:**

### **2018 Gold Medal Recipients Biographies**

#### **Basil J.R. Jones and Adrian P. Kohler**

Basil Jones and Adrian Kohler are internationally known for their astounding creations, which we have had the good fortune to see firsthand tonight. Partners in puppetry and in life for nearly four decades, these talented innovators went from performing out of a caravan, to producing their own plays on stages across Africa, to a groundbreaking collaboration of *War Horse* with the Royal National Theater of Great Britain.

Under Basil's and Adrian's guidance, Handspring has received a Special Tony Award, an Olivier Award, and many other awards.

#### **John Kani**

Few actors embody the history, resilience, and spirit of South Africa in the way that John Kani does. From leading the Market Theater's Serpent Players, to starring in several Tony-winning productions, to his recent role in *Black Panther*, John has earned his reputation as a household name in South Africa.

John's talent has taken him around the world, from London to Montreal to the Kennedy Center.

#### **Sibongile Khumalo**

Known as the "First Lady of African Song", Sibongile Khumalo is the crown jewel of a musical family. Inspired by parents who instilled in her a love of music and culture, Sibongile's talent

crosses borders as well as genres. She holds a deep dedication to keeping that tradition alive for future generations, advocating for arts education through her Deputy Chairmanship of the South African Music Rights Organization and the Khabi Mngoma Foundation, named in honor of her father.

### **Dr. Gcina Mhlophe**

Gcina Mhlophe's exuberant storytelling has taken her across the globe, whether a library in inner-city Chicago, the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, or deep in the heart of Greenland. Named to the BBC's *100 Women Project*, Gcina has put her creative mind to work throughout her career, collaborating with groups from Ladysmith Black Mambazo to local schools creating some truly unique works of storytelling genius.

Gcina's passionately strives to cement South Africa as a reading nation, providing books to rural areas, and hosting a book and storytelling festival in Durban.

### **McCoy Mrubata**

McCoy Mrubata's childhood was filled with the sounds of the Langa Township, influencing his upbringing and setting the course for his entire life. An accomplished saxophonist, collaborator, and bandleader, McCoy's award-winning career has spanned the globe, from Johannesburg to Oslo. With talents ranging beyond live performance, his resume includes composing scores for South African drama productions and international stage productions of the lives of notable musicians.

## **GOLD MEDAL IN THE ARTS PAST RECIPIENTS**

**2005 ST. PETERSBURG:** Olivia De Havilland, Valery Gergiev, Martha Ingram, Irwin Jacobs, Mærsk Mckinney Møeller, Trevor Nunn

**2006 LONDON:** Darcey Bussell, Michael Caine, Judi Dench, Jeremy Irons, Jacob Rothschild, Lily Safra

**2007 BEIJING:** Song Zuying, Minister Sun Jiazheng

**2008 BUENOS AIRES:** Norma Aleandro, Julio Bocca, Paloma Herrera, Mercedes Sosa

**2009 ISTANBUL:** Cihat Aşkin, Cana Gürmen, Ahmet Kocabiyik

**2010 TOKYO:** Tadao Ando, Midori, Kanzaburo Nakamura, Yukio Ninagawa

**2012 MADRID:** Pedro Almodóvar, Sara Baras, Plácido Domingo, Paco Peña, Tamara Rojo

**2013 PRAGUE:** Jiří Bělohlávek, Soňa Červená, Karel Komárek, Magdalena Kožená

**2014 UAE:** Hoor Al-Qasimi, Badr Jafar, Quincy Jones, Arif And Fayeeza Naqvi, Zaki Al Nusseibeh

**2015 PARIS:** Pierre Boulez, Leslie Caron, Alexandre Desplat, Yasmina Reza

**2016 DUBLIN:** Sir James Galway, Sir Van Morrison, Fiona Shaw, Jim Sheridan, Enda Walsh

**2017 MILAN:** Salvatore Accardo, Carlos Bulgheroni, Renato Bruson, Gianandrea Noseda

**Media Contact:**

Dana Dvořáková

Ředitelka komunikace, KKCG, a.s.

Vinohradská 230, Praha 10

T +420 225 010 399

M +420 602 372 834

E [dana.dvorakova@kkcg.com](mailto:dana.dvorakova@kkcg.com)