

# ENTERTAINMENT

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## Toronto playwright's win means \$25,000 is heading west

BY PETER BIRNIE  
VANCOUVER SUN

The latest winner of the richest prize in Canadian theatre is Toronto playwright Daniel MacIvor. Thanks to a generous provision in the Siminovitch Prize, good fortune has also smiled on a pair of up-and-comers in Vancouver theatre.

This week MacIvor was named the 2008 recipient of the Elinore & Lou Siminovitch Prize in Theatre. The award is worth \$100,000 — with the unique provision that the winner must give a quarter of that away to a protégé.



Daniel MacIvor

MacIvor chose Medina Hahn and Daniel Arnold, playwrights and performers who had recently been mentored by the prodigious playwright. In a telephone interview, Hahn and Arnold revealed they learned of the \$25,000 gift two weeks ago.

"We were so excited," Hahn said, "but we couldn't tell anyone. So we would just tell each other."

"Over and over," Arnold adds. "It was definitely hard to keep under wraps."

The pair are best known in Vancouver for their outstanding one-act two-hander titled *Tuesdays and Sundays*, last seen here in 2007.

Their working relationship with MacIvor began in 2003 with an emerging-artist scholarship from Alberta Theatre Projects, which allowed the artists to study *A Beautiful View*, MacIvor's final production for da da kamera, the theatre company he'd created in Toronto.

"What we wanted to do," said Arnold, "was mentor under someone who creates lots of new plays, kind of like we do, writing and then performing them."

"It's a nice relationship, to have someone who's been through it a lot help us with our new creation."

*Any Night* is that new creation. First seen at Victoria's Belfry Theatre in February, it went on to win an award as outstanding new play at the recent Summer-Works Festival in Toronto.

Here's what we can look forward to when it reaches Vancouver:

"A troubled young woman suffers from night terrors. The young man living above her becomes her guardian and lover. But the only safe place may be in their minds." In their minds, Arnold and Hahn have already devoted parts of their prize to tackling some debts and paying back some of the people who helped them through the creation of *Any Night*.

"We have a website that hasn't been updated in some time because we just haven't had the money to do that," says Arnold.

"And maybe," he adds with a laugh, "we'll do a hot-tub party!"

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PHOTO ILLUSTRATION MAGGIE WONG/VANCOUVER SUN

A wide variety of artistic disciplines were included in the 2008 Cultural Olympiad.

## Cultural Olympiad offers big bang for the buck

ARTS | Program is a small part of Olympics budget, but means a lot to local artists

KEVIN GRIFFIN  
VANCOUVER SUN

Scores of artists, musicians and arts administrators have been invited to Vanoc's main office in east Vancouver today to hear the lineup for the expanded 2009 Cultural Olympiad.

In a sneak preview of what's in store for the second Cultural Olympiad, to be held next Feb. 1 to March 21, Vanoc has organized performances that include projected visuals by Neografik, aerial dance by Aeriosa, and music by Redshift.

With an increased budget of \$1.25 million, the 2009 Cultural Olympiad lineup is expected to include more national and international performing arts events than in 2008.

A major concert will also kick off the seven-week cultural festival and mark the one-year countdown to the 2010 Winter and Paralympic Games.

More than 170,000 people attended 300 free and ticketed performances in Metro Vancouver, Britannia Beach and Whistler during the last arts and cultural festival in February and March, and attendance is expected to exceed that this time around.

The local arts and cultural organizations who took part in the first Cultur-

al Olympiad say they benefitted in several ways, including attracting more people because of the event's substantial marketing clout and improving the quality of their performances.

The main challenge they faced was making sure they didn't run afoul of Vanoc's strict sponsorship requirements about the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

Even though the money provided to arts groups is a small part of the overall 2010 Olympics and Paralympics Games budget, taking part in arts and cultural events is a major way people are expected to share in the Olympics' experience.

In March, Music on Main presented Terry Riley's *In C*, a milestone in musical history that heralded the start of minimalism when it was performed in 1964.

Artistic director David Pay said the \$8,000 from the Cultural Olympiad went into technical production and more rehearsal time for the musicians. Piggy-backing on the Cultural Olympiad's big marketing clout helped make the concert a sellout.

"In our case, it really contributed to Vancouver's cultural ecology: it allowed us to hire musicians to spend more time together and create a better ensemble," Pay said.

"The extra money allowed production values to soar."

Although the concert was recorded by the CBC for rebroadcast, probably next April, no CBC logo was allowed in Heritage Hall during the performance because it is not the host broadcaster for 2010. The CBC recording truck even had to hide in the back lane.

But Pay said none of that came as a surprise. Officials with the Cultural Olympiad were very clear about their sponsorship requirements right from the start.

"Anytime co-presenters come together with different sponsors there's the dance about how to acknowledge sponsors," he said.

"[Vanoc] is a bigger organization with a huge legal department dealing with international sponsorship in a way that most Vancouver arts presenters aren't."

The Drum and Light Festival wouldn't have happened without the \$10,000 from the Cultural Olympiad, said musician and producer John Korsrud. Held on two successive nights at the WISE Hall in east Vancouver, the performances were the first of their kind to use live music from a 14-piece band instead of recorded music played by a DJ to replicate the high-energy expe-

rience of a rave.

After the first show sold out, word of mouth resulted in the second selling out within minutes of the doors opening. Korsrud said hundreds of disappointed people had to be turned away.

"The funding definitely allowed us to realize my vision," he said. "I would have liked more money but I imagine that everyone says that."

To extend the reach of the existing national New Music in New Places program, the Canadian Music Centre used the \$10,000 from the Cultural Olympiad to hold several free concerts, including *Dead Serious* in the art-deco former funeral home called The Chapel in east Vancouver, *Mined Over Matter* in the tunnels and former mine buildings at Britannia Beach and a performance in the Whistler Public Library.

"We scheduled three extra events that we would not have done otherwise," said Colin Miles, the CMC's regional director for B.C.

"There were people at the concerts who had never heard Canadian contemporary music before. They went away with their ears and minds and hearts opened. You can't ask for anything more."

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With his new album *Cardinology*, the eccentric singer-songwriter seems at one with his band. D9

#### SHELLEY FRALIC ON MADONNA'S STICKY SIDE

It all looked so fairytale-perfect, but somehow we knew that marriage would end in tears. D8

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