

B.S.L.A. INAUGURAL CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

For immediate release – August 19, 2022

It has been just over two years since Philip Akin completed his tenure as the Artistic Director of Obsidian Theatre, and the subsequent launch of the Philip Akin Black Shoulders Legacy Award (BSLA). This groundbreaking award was created to safeguard the legacy of support for emerging Black Canadian theatre artists that Philip Akin catalyzed. This is the first award of its kind, solely dedicated to the success of Black Canadian theatre artists, ensuring creators are equipped with the skills to be at the top of their professional game.

The initial outpouring of support in honour of Philip was extraordinary, and we thank all of those who were a part of the initial fundraising push which began with \$150,000.

Throughout the pandemic we have continued to build the fund in preparation for this inaugural call for applications. With the funds now managed by the Shaw Festival Endowment Foundation, the award received matching funds from the Department of Canadian Heritage under the Canada Cultural Investment Fund. These matching funds, along with additional donations have brought us to approximately \$500,000. We have now raised 70% of our goal which, when reached, will self-sustain annual awards of \$5,000 each to five deserving Black theatre professionals.

Today marks the Opening Night of August Wilson's *Gem of the Ocean* directed by Philip Akin, at the Shaw Festival's Jackie Maxwell Studio Theatre. It was agreed upon by the committee that this would be the perfect date to announce the opening of applications for the inaugural award!

Applications will be accepted until October 14th and winners will be announced by the end of November 2022. Full application details are on the last page.

We welcome you to spread the word, as we continue to build on an initiative that is destined to continue changing the face of Canadian theatre.

AWARD DETAILS & COMMITTEES

The Black Shoulders Legacy Award is a groundbreaking initiative that aims to support and nurture young-in-craft Black Canadian theatre artists through financial support, artistic guidance, and national promotion. Five artists will be selected each year via submission and awarded a \$5,000 honorarium towards training and other opportunities to enhance and grow their artistic craft. This national award will be given to both performing and non-performing artists who show promise and are working towards a future in theatre, further amplifying Black voices in the Canadian theatre landscape.

SHAW FESTIVAL FOUNDATION - AWARD COMMITTEE:

Philip Akin, Tim Jennings, Mitchell Marcus, Andy Pringle (Shaw Festival Foundation Board), Kimberley Rampersad, Taylor Akin, and Luke Reece

ARTISTIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE :

Quincy Armorer, Shauntay Grant, Kevin Hanchard, Omari Newton, Kimberley Rampersad, Luke Reece and Tanisha Taitt

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

Suzanne Lanthier (Lead), Victoria Laberge, Mitchell Marcus, Erika Morey

HOW TO DONATE

1. **Online via Canada Helps** - choose Philip Akin Black Shoulders Legacy Endowed Fund
[Shaw Festival Endowment Foundation | Charity Profile | Donate Online | Canadahelps](#)

2. **Emailing or calling Laura Langlois** at llanglois@shawfest.com , or 905-468-2153 ext. 260 to make a credit card donation by phone.

3. **Mailing a cheque** to the following address:

Black Shoulders Legacy Award, c/o Shaw Festival Endowment Foundation
10 Queen's Parade
PO Box 774

Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON L0S 1J0 Cheque should be payable to: Shaw Festival Endowment Foundation
And the cheque memo line or an accompanying letter should indicate 'Black Shoulders Legacy Award (or BSLA)'.

CONTACT & MORE INFORMATION:

www.bsla.ca

blackshoulderslegacyaward@gmail.com

Facebook: @Philip Akin- Black Shoulders Legacy Award

Twitter: @Black_Shoulders

Instagram: @Black_Shoulders

Hashtag: #BlackShouldersLA

[September 10, 2020 Toronto Star Announcement](#)



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Deadline: October 14, 2022

The Black Shoulders Legacy Award is a groundbreaking initiative that aims to support and nurture young-in-craft Black Canadian theatre professionals through financial support, artistic guidance, and national promotion. Young-in-craft professionals are defined as those of any age learning or deepening a new craft. Five applicants will be selected each year via submission and awarded a \$5,000 honorarium towards training and other opportunities to enhance and grow their artistic craft. This national award will be given to both performers and non-performers who show exceptional promise and are working towards a future in theatre, further amplifying Black voices in the Canadian theatre landscape.

Award Eligibility

- Must be a Canadian resident or citizen
- Must identify as Black
- Must be practicing in Theatre or the theatrical arts (theatre, dance or opera)
- Must be applying with a proposed opportunity in training and/or education with an eye to:
 - Deepening skill set
 - Learning new skill set
 - Experimenting with new artistic craft

Candidates whether selected or not, are eligible to apply in a subsequent year.

Application Process

- Please submit a written submission (maximum 2 pages) or video submission (maximum 5 minutes) that outlines the proposed opportunity in training and/or education. Please tell us why you are pursuing this now, and what you hope to gain from the experience.
- Please include a résumé and/or CV with your submission.
- Please do not submit support material.

Deadline: October 14th, 2022 11:59pm.

Please send applications or questions to blackshoulderslegacyaward@gmail.com

A shortlist of applicants will be brought into the final stage, a conversation with members of the jury. You may be asked to submit support material for this round. Applicants will be notified either way.