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For immediate release

Gordon Pinsent to mentor Kevin Loring as part of the 2010 Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Mentorship Program

Montreal (Canada) –The National Arts Centre (NAC) is delighted to announce that Canadian screen and theatre icon **Gordon Pinsent** has chosen to mentor playwright and actor **Kevin Loring** through the 2010 Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Mentorship Program.

The Program allows past recipients of the Governor General's Performing Arts Award, this country's highest honour in the arts, to give back to the next generation of artists. Mr. Pinsent received the Governor General's Performing Arts Award for Lifetime Artistic Achievement in 2004.

Playwright and performer Kevin Loring recently won the 2009 Governor General's Literary Award for Drama for his play *Where the Blood Mixes*. As an actor he has performed in numerous plays across Canada, including Marie Clements' *Burning Vision* and *Copper Thunderbird*, and most recently the NAC's 40th anniversary production of George Ryga's *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe*.

Unlike the numerous mentorship programs that support emerging artists, the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Mentorship Program—a partnership between the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Foundation and the NAC—is designed to offer creative guidance to talented mid-career artists. The Mentorship Program serves as a catalyst and an investment in future Canadian artistic achievement.

"I'm very happy to be part of this Program," said Gordon Pinsent. "Young voices like Kevin's need to be heard, and it makes me feel good to know that I can help get him get his proper due and the recognition he deserves."

"The Mentorship Program is an amazing honour," said Kevin Loring, who is a member of the N'lakap'mux (Thompson) First Nation in Lytton, BC. "I always look to my elders to help illuminate the paths I may encounter, or to shed some insight on the ones I have already encountered. I hope to absorb some of Gordon's experience and wisdom around our craft. I take it as an opportunity to make an ally and a friend, and to get to know one of our country's great talents."

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“The National Arts Centre is proud to help provide these kinds of opportunities for outstanding artists like Kevin to benefit from the gifts and experience of creative giants like Gordon Pinsent,” said Peter Herrndorf, President and CEO of the National Arts Centre.

Kevin Loring is the first **theatre** artist in the history of the Mentorship Program. In 2008, dance icon Veronica Tennant selected Crystal Pite, the dynamic young dancer whose international career has taken off in recent years. In 2009, jazz legend Oliver Jones chose to mentor the talented jazz artist Dione Taylor. Perhaps most rewarding for these artists and their mentors is the opportunity to share, learn and grow for many years to come. In addition to receiving an honorarium and artistic mentorship, each mentee is prominently showcased on the national stage during the Governor General’s Performing Arts Awards Gala weekend.

Created in 1992, the Governor General’s Performing Arts Awards are the most prestigious artistic honour bestowed upon Canadians in the performing arts. The Awards are a celebration of excellence that introduces Canadians to new artists, raises awareness of achievements in varied disciplines, and invites Canadians to applaud the performing artists whose passion moves, entertains and inspires us.

The recipients of this year’s Governor General’s Performing Arts Awards were announced today at a press conference at Théâtre ESPACE GO in Montreal. For a complete list of recipients, visit ggpaa.ca.

(Please see attached biographies)

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BIOGRAPHIES

Gordon Pinsent

One of Canada's most beloved and best-known actors, Gordon Pinsent was born in Newfoundland. He has contributed to our country's entertainment heritage on many levels: as an actor, director, writer, producer, and supporter of all things artistic that Canada has to offer. He served with the Royal Canadian Regiment for three years and worked as a dance instructor and illustrator before he talked his way into his first job as an actor at the Winnipeg Repertory Theatre. While in Winnipeg he was also involved in many of the first radio dramas and live network television programs to be broadcast from that city. His roles range from icons of the establishment — such as a Member of Parliament (*Quentin Durgens, M.P.*), President of the United States (*The Forbin Project*), Sergeant Scott of the *Forest Rangers* and Constable Fraser Sr. on *Due South* — to the iconoclastic, such as Will Cole (*The Rowdyman*) and John in *John and the Missus*, both of which he wrote. A multi-talented performer and creator, he has appeared in theatres across Canada and has broadened his reach by transferring, with notable success, many of his own creations from page to stage to screen. He has been honoured academically (Memorial University, U.P.E.I. and Queen's) and for film (four Genie Awards), television (six Gemini Awards) and the stage (DORA). He is also the recipient of ACTRA's Lifetime Achievement Award and the Banff Television Festival Award for Lifetime Achievement. For his service to the entertainment industry, he received the John Drainie Award for Contribution to Broadcasting, and his country has honoured him as an Officer (1980) and Companion (1998) of the Order of Canada. In 2007, he was inducted into Canada's Walk of Fame. Gordon Pinsent's recent work includes the acclaimed film *Away from Her* (for which he won the Genie for Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role) and the CTV hit comedy *Corner Gas*.

Kevin Loring

Kevin Loring is a member of the N'lakap'mux (Thompson) First Nation in Lytton, BC. As an actor he has performed in numerous plays across Canada, including Marie Clements' *Burning Vision* and *Copper Thunderbird*, and most recently the NAC's 40th-anniversary production of George Ryga's *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe*. He also starred in the 2007 feature film *Pathfinder*, and co-produced and co-hosted the documentary *Canyon War: The Untold Story* about the 1858 Fraser Canyon War. He was the recipient of the 2005 Vancouver Arts Award for Emerging Theatre Artist and Artist in Residence at The Playhouse Theatre Company in 2006, and is currently Playwright in Residence at the National Arts Centre. His first play, *Where the Blood Mixes*, won the Jessie Richardson Award for Outstanding Original Script; the Sydney J. Risk Prize for Outstanding Original Script by an Emerging Playwright; and most recently the 2009 Governor General's Literary Award for Drama. *Where the Blood Mixes* received rave reviews when it premiered at the 2008 Luminato Festival in Toronto, and later at the 2008 Magnetic North Festival in Vancouver. A remount of this production, in association with the playwright's own company, The Savage Society, is scheduled for a national tour as part of the 2010 Cultural Olympiad. The NAC will also present the play during the 2009–10 English Theatre season. Kevin Loring will participate in the closing ceremonies of the Aboriginal Pavilion at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver.