



Media Refer: Dianne Weinrib/Josh Dumont, DW Communications 416.703.5479
dw@dwcommunications.net

Peggy Baker

Honoured as this year's Recipient of The George Luscombe Award for Mentorship

Toronto, June 1, 2015 – **The George Luscombe Award** was inaugurated in 1999. Revolutionary theatre founder and artistic director George Luscombe founded Toronto Workshop Productions in 1959, marking the beginnings of Toronto's alternative theatre movement. He was Artistic Director for 27 years at TWP.

This year's recipient is **Peggy Baker**, Artistic Director of Peggy Baker Dance Projects and Artist-in-Residence at Canada's National Ballet School. Ms. Baker began her career in 1974 as a founding member of Toronto's Dancemakers, toured internationally with Lar Lubovitch's celebrated New York company throughout the eighties, and joined Mikhail Baryshnikov and Mark Morris for the inaugural season of their White Oak Dance Project in 1990, subsequently forging important creative relationships with Paul-André Fortier (Montreal), James Kudelka (Toronto), Doug Varone (New York), Tere O'Connor Dance (New York), Molissa Fenley and Dancers (New York) and Toronto Dance Theatre through numerous performance projects.

She established Peggy Baker Dance Projects in 1990, and for the first 20 years she dedicated herself to solo performance, winning rapturous praise for the eloquence and depth of her dancing, and accolades for her collaborative partnerships with extraordinary musicians and designers. Over its 25-year history Peggy Baker Dance Projects has been presented at major festivals and dance centres across the globe. Since 2010, Baker has focused her choreography on works for small ensembles.

Some of Toronto's most respected dance artists count Ms. Baker among their top influences. Her role as a mentor to younger dance artists is perhaps best reflected in her eight-year project, The Choreographer's Trust. From 2002 to 2010, she passed on six of her choreographies to twelve dancers: Kate Alton, Nova Battacharya, Sylvain Brochu, Shannon Cooney, Chris Grider, Rex Harrington, Kate Holden, Tanya Howard, Sasha Ivanochko, Helen Jones, Andrea Nann and Jessica Runge. A booklet and DVD set for each year of the project have been compiled, containing footage of the process and writing by Baker and literary manager Amy Bowring, as well as sketches by Jerry Silverberg. Ms. Baker explains the rationale behind The Choreographer's Trust: "In the summer of 2002, realizing that unless I passed my dances onto others, the hard-won lessons embedded in them risked being lost when I retired."

Ms. Baker has been honoured with numerous awards for her extraordinary achievements and contributions, including the Governor General's Award for Lifetime Achievement, the Premier's Award for Excellence in the Arts, the Order of Canada, the Order of Ontario, five Dora Mavor Moore Awards, the Toronto Arts Council's Margo Bindhardt Award, the Walter Carsen Prize for Excellence in the Performing Arts, a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, and Honorary Doctorates from the University of Calgary and York.

Previous winners of The George Luscombe Award are Franco Boni, Yvette Nolan, Leah Cherniak & Martha Ross, Iris Turcott, Andy McKim, ahdri zhina mandiel, Layne Coleman, Alison Sealy-Smith, Winston Morgan, Maja Ardal, Urjo Kareda, Ken Gass, Jenny Phipps, and Ruth Howard.

The George Luscombe Award is administered by the Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts. Committee members are: Chair - Maja Ardal, Steven Bush, Ravi Jain and Anusree Roy. The George Luscombe Award comes with original artwork by Theo Dimson, a copy of the book *Conversations with George Luscombe: Steven Bush in conversation with the Canadian Theatre visionary* and a **cash prize** of \$1,000 through the generous sponsorship of an anonymous donor.

The Dora Mavor Moore Awards are administered by the Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts (TAPA). In addition to the Doras, other programs and services provided by TAPA include: T.O. TIX - Toronto's Official One Stop Ticket Shop at Yonge-Dundas Square and online at www.totix.ca; Toronto's Official Theatre Guide; hipTIX, offering \$5 tickets to students between the ages of 14 and 29; citySPECIAL; the Commercial Theatre Development Fund; and the Travel Retreat Initiatives Program – TRIP. For more information visit www.tapa.ca and www.totix.ca.