

Director and playwright Tawiah Ben M'Carthy honoured with 2024 Pauline McGibbon Award

Toronto, May 28, 2024 – Director and playwright Tawiah Ben M'Carthy is the recipient of the **2024 Pauline McGibbon Award**. This award is presented to an Ontario-resident professional artist in the early stages of their career who has contributed to the well-being of Ontario's theatre community, displays unique talent, and has the potential for excellence.

Tawiah received the award today during the nomination announcement press conference for the 44th annual [Dora Mavor Moore Awards](#), held by the Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts (TAPA) at Meridian Hall in Toronto.



ABOUT TAWIAH BEN M'Carthy

- Tawiah Ben M'Carthy was born in Accra, Ghana, where he was introduced to multidisciplinary theatre, and is now a Toronto-based theatre performer, playwright, creator and director.
- As a theatre artist, Tawiah often employs both West African and Western theatre practices, combining the art of storytelling, text, movement and rituals with staging, design and characterization.
- He trained as an actor in the Acting Conservatory Bachelor of Fine Arts program at York University and went on to perform in works like *Three Sisters* (Soulpepper/Obsidian Theatre), *Sizwe Banzi Is Dead* (Soulpepper Theatre) and *Maanomaa, My Brother* (Blue Bird Theatre Collective/Canadian Stage).
- Tawiah's practice as a director began in 2016. He continued to develop his directing skills through hands-on mentorship and internship experiences at Obsidian Theatre, Shaw Theatre Festival, and Factory Theatre. Tawiah was also an artistic director intern at Canadian Stage with the support of the Metcalf Foundation.
- He is the creator, playwright, and performer of the critically acclaimed Dora Mavor Moore Award-winning play *Obaaberima*, which was developed and produced in residency at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre.
- Selected directing credits include *Here Lies Henry* (Factory Theatre), *Topdog Underdog* (Canadian Stage), *Fairview* (Obsidian Theatre/Canadian Stage), *Death and the King's Horseman* (Stratford Festival) and *Rihannaboi95* (Young People's Theatre).
- Tawiah is a founding member of [Saga Collectif](#) and co-founder and co-artistic director of [Blue Bird Theatre Collective](#).

QUOTE

The assessors were unanimous in their selection of Tawiah M'Carthy as laureate for the 2024 Pauline McGibbon Award. In particular, the assessors pointed to Tawiah's ability to communicate and his promising trajectory as a creator: "Collaboration is the foundation of Tawiah's work. He is an outstanding communicator both with the

creative team and with his audience. Tawiah started his work as a director from a place of strength and shows huge potential to grow creatively and make a long-term impact.”

ABOUT THE PAULINE MCGIBBON AWARD

- Established in 1981, the award honours former Lieutenant Governor Pauline McGibbon for her support and patronage of the arts. It includes a **\$7,000 prize** and a bronze **medal** designed by Dora de Pédery-Hunt.
- The award is given each year by the Province of Ontario through the [Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport](#) and is administered by the [Ontario Arts Council](#).
- The award is cyclical in nature: the first year of the three-year cycle, the award goes to a designer, the second year to a director, and the third year to a production craftsperson.
- The winner is selected by a peer assessment jury, which this year consisted of **Kathryn Mackay** (director and artistic director, Kingston) and 2020 McGibbon Laureate **Dillon Orr** (director, theatre creator and Francophone theatre producer, Ottawa).
- Previous winners include set and costume designer [Samantha McCue](#) (2023), props and costume builder [Monica Lee](#) (2022), and theatre director [Dillon Orr](#) (2021). [Full list of Pauline McGibbon Award laureates.](#)



The Pauline McGibbon Award medal, designed by Dora de Pédery-Hunt.



Official portrait of Pauline McGibbon, by Cleeve Horne.

For more information:

Shoshana Wasser
Associate Director of Public Affairs and Communications
Ontario Arts Council
416-969-7434 / swasser@arts.on.ca