

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**VANCOUVER ARTS ORGANIZATIONS CONGRATULATE
MOH AND YULANDA FARIS**

Recipients of 2010 Ramon John Hnatyshyn Award for Voluntarism in the Performing Arts

Vancouver, BC ~ Vancouver Opera, Bard on the Beach, Vancouver International Writers Festival, The Dance Centre and Judith Marcuse Projects congratulate **Moh and Yulanda Faris** on their recently-awarded 2010 Ramon John Hnatyshyn Award for Voluntarism in the Performing Arts, one of the eight Governor General's Performing Arts Awards.

Active in the Vancouver arts community for close to 40 years, Mr. and Mrs. Faris have generously donated time and financial support to several organizations, including Vancouver Opera and its Foundation, the Scotiabank Dance Centre and the Dance Foundation, Judith Marcuse Projects, Vancouver International Writers Festival, Bard on the Beach, Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver Symphony, Vancouver Children's Festival, and many others.

"There are no two people in our community more deserving of this award than Moh and Yulanda Faris," says **James Wright**, General Director of Vancouver Opera. "Their work in establishing the Judith Forst Fund for Young Artist Training is a testament to their commitment to the future of the arts in Canada. They truly believe in the lasting value of the arts to our lives, and that passion is evident in all they have done for VO and other arts organizations in Vancouver."

Yulanda Faris is past chair of Vancouver Opera and current chair of the Vancouver Opera Foundation, and with Mr. Faris founded the Judith Forst Fund for Young Artist Training, a fund that supports young singers in the early stages of their careers.

Christopher Gaze, Artistic Director of Bard on the Beach acknowledges their ongoing contribution to the annual Shakespeare Festival and beyond: "This prestigious award to Mr. and Mrs. Faris is so well deserved. They are endlessly interested in and wonderfully supportive of the arts in our city. Bravo Moh and Yulanda. Canada thanks you."

"How wonderfully appropriate that Moh and Yulanda are being recognized for their remarkable contributions to the arts in our city for over 30 years," says **Judith Marcuse**, Artistic Producer, Judith Marcuse Projects and Co-Director of The International Centre of Art for Social Change. "Their support has taken many forms, always both visionary and pragmatic. Their belief in art and artists has endowed individuals and organizations with courage, hope and strength to keep producing the best that we can."

Mohammed Faris was instrumental in establishing the Scotiabank Dance Centre, an \$11-million facility that provides Vancouver's diverse dance community with a home of its own. Opened in 2001, the centre includes the 150 seat Faris Family Studio.

"This award is well deserved and comes to two people who have shown and continue to show huge generosity of spirit and heart," says **Mirna Zagar**, Executive Director of The Dance Centre. "Without Moh's heartfelt tenacity and true belief that the art of dance deserves a home, it is doubtful we would now have Scotiabank Dance Centre, a building which has become Canada's flagship dance facility and has in turn nurtured an everlasting sense of pride in our community. Both Moh and Yulanda have shown not only their passion for the arts but a true commitment to seeing the BC arts and culture scene flourish."

Vancouver International Writers Festival Artistic Director **Hal Wake** says, "We thank Moh and Yulanda for the extraordinary amount of time and energy they have committed, and for their financial support of the Writers Festival. For many years Yulanda was on the VIWF board and chaired our gala fundraiser. But what truly sets them apart is their active participation in our Festival and in Vancouver's cultural scene, their attendance at events, and their advocacy. I know that I will see Yulanda at every Festival, at a half dozen events or more. And she always has something insightful and incisive to say about what she has witnessed and the books she has read."

The Governor General's Performing Arts Awards (GGPAA) are Canada's foremost distinction for excellence in the performing arts. The awards recognize a stellar array of artists and arts volunteers for their outstanding lifetime contribution to Canada's cultural life.

The Governor General's Performing Arts Awards were created in 1992 under the patronage of the Right Honourable Ramon John Hnatyshyn (1934-2002), then Governor General of Canada. Today, we are honoured to have Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean as patron. For more information, visit www.ggpaa.ca.

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