The Elizabeth Sterling Haynes Awards 2020/2021



## The Elizabeth Sterling Haynes Awards Committee **Statement of Inclusion**

The Elizabeth Sterling Haynes Awards Committee recognizes that as a theatre community we are living and working on Treaty 6 territory and the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations including the:

- Cree
- Saulteaux (Ojibway/Anishinaabe)
- Blackfoot (including Piegan, Blood, Siksika)
- Métis
- Dene Nakoda
- Nakota Sioux
- Iroquois

We recognize that land acknowledgements are living documents that will change as our learning grows about the land and its original peoples. We are always open to corrections and making changes to our land acknowledgement as our learning continues. We are grateful to the original and ongoing caretakers of this land for the opportunity to practice the art of theatre in Edmonton Amiskwaciwâskahikan  $\neg \Gamma^{n}b \cdot \cap \dot{\neg} \cdot \neg b \square \Delta b^{2}$  and are inspired by treaty values in the spirit of community coming together through the celebration of the Elizabeth Sterling Haynes Awards.

The Sterling Awards are meant to celebrate the outstanding achievements of Edmonton's present generation of theatre artists. By doing so, we also continue to honour the legacy of the pioneering performer, director, and educator Elizabeth Sterling Haynes, whose tireless dedication to the creation of a uniquely Albertan theatrical tradition continues to find its justification in the remarkably diverse, innovative, courageous, provocative, and entertaining work of Edmonton Theatre Artists.

The Elizabeth Sterling Haynes Awards Committee is an ad-hoc, volunteer run group of individuals who are committed to honouring and celebrating professional or professionalizing theatre artists in Edmonton. The Sterling Awards committee is a group of organizers who are responsible for recruiting jury members for the Fringe and for the mainstage Edmonton theatre season, providing the mainstage and Fringe jury with a yearly schedule, and facilitating comp tickets for jury members to attend Edmonton theatre productions, fundraising and sponsorship, and producing the annual Sterling Awards event.

Awards and ceremonies carry power. We recognize award ceremonies can perpetuate colonial and oppressive viewpoints regarding what is considered worthy of "artistic excellence" or celebration. We are sorry for past behaviour that has enforced systemic barriers and seek to change this. We, the leading ad-hoc committee, oppose racism and marginalization. We stand in the circle with those in the Edmonton theatre community who have been oppressed because of their race, sexuality, gender, disability, or role as a caregiver and commit to continuing to seek members from many lived experiences to collaborate with on our committee and juries.

To address this we are:

- May 2020 and ongoing: Committing to creating a safer space in our committee meetings and during the yearly awards ceremony rehearsal and performance through our commitment to an egalitarian power structure and flexibility in engagement for our committee members.
- **May 2020 and ongoing:** Have taken and will continue to provide anti-oppression and anti-racism training for our committee members and jurors
- **February 2021:** Accepting feedback from the community through an anonymous form on the Elizabeth Sterling Haynes Awards' <u>website</u>
- February 2021: An open call for new members using 35//50 model

We are looking to the future that commits itself to changing, growing, and removing barriers so that Edmonton theatre artists are valued, heard, and respected. We commit to a future of changing, growing, and removing barriers so that artists of all backgrounds, abilities and lifestyles are valued, heard, and respected. We commit to educating ourselves as a committee, and to amplifying voices and stories from underrepresented Edmonton theatre community members for a more equitable future.

It is time to listen and learn. We want to do the work and move forward together as a community. We aim to respond to the feedback openly to create an inclusive Sterling committee and community.

Thank you for your consideration.

## The Elizabeth Sterling Haynes Awards Committee:

Kendra Connor, Mathew Hulshof, Jason Hardwick, Madelaine Knight, Taylor Chadwick, April Banigan and Kristi Hansen