

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Arts Veteran Claire Hopkinson joins Canada's Theatre Museum
Former CEO of Toronto Arts Foundation and Toronto Arts Council Becomes Consulting
Director**

TORONTO (January 16, 2025) - Canada's Theatre Museum is set to embark on a transformative journey with the appointment of **Claire Hopkinson, M.S.M.**, as Consulting Director. The Board of Directors is thrilled to welcome Claire to the leadership team as the Museum prepares for its inaugural exhibitions in 2025 at its permanent home in the historic Elgin and Winter Garden Theatres in Toronto.

"This is a significant step in the evolution of Canada's Theatre Museum," said **Brian Robertson, O.C.**, President of the Board. "Claire has demonstrated transformational leadership throughout her long and distinguished career. Recent generous gifts from donors are providing the momentum to ramp up programming and planning to open our doors to the public in Toronto's vibrant theatre district. With Claire's involvement, we are confident this vision will become a reality."

The creation of a permanent home to celebrate Canada's accomplishments in the performing arts has been a long-held dream fueled by the persistence and dedication of many artists and arts supporters. Pop-up exhibitions, *Theatre Museum Goes Backstage* public learning events, and invaluable archives have kept the dream alive. Over 900,000 viewers have watched R.H. Thomson and Andrew Moodie interview some of Canada's most beloved pioneering artists in the Museum's *Legend Library*, an online oral history project. Honorary Patrons **Tantoo Cardinal, C.M.**, and **Colm Feore, O.C.**, lead an illustrious group of advisors and Board members who, alongside a dedicated staff, are working to achieve this timely vision.

"This is an exciting and important project," remarked Claire Hopkinson. "It's a perfect fit for me, as I deeply admire the incredible talent that Canada has to offer. Our performing arts heritage has been created through inspiration, imagination, and dedication and it is uniquely Canadian. I am eager to collaborate with Executive Director Michael Wallace and the team to create a contemporary museum that celebrates Canada's diverse artists and their stories, offering a permanent home to honour our wonderful cultural legacy." "This is a terrific way to start the year," said **Michael Wallace**, Executive Director. "When we reached out to Claire, we knew her perspective and expertise would be invaluable. Her ideas for engaging audiences, building partnerships, and expanding programming are inspiring. I'm thrilled to work with her in her new role as Consulting Director to bring these exciting plans to life."

ABOUT CLAIRE HOPKINSON

Claire Hopkinson served as CEO of Toronto Arts Foundation and Toronto Arts Council (TAC) for 17 years, overseeing one of Canada's largest arts councils with a budget of \$25 million. Throughout her tenure, Claire's mission was to support artists and arts organizations while broadening access to the arts for all Toronto residents through her visionary initiative, "Creative City, Block by Block."

Collaborating with public and private sector partners, Claire developed strategic funding opportunities for the city's artists, including emergency funds during the COVID-19 pandemic. She spearheaded innovative, artist-led partnerships, expanding access to the arts in City Museums, Parks, the Toronto Public Library, and the Toronto District School Board. Claire founded and curated a portfolio of donor-funded awards celebrating excellence and fostering innovation, presented at the annual Mayor's Arts Lunch, an event she launched in 2005.

In addition, Claire played a pivotal role in establishing initiatives such as the Neighbourhood Arts Network, East End Arts, North York Arts, Creative Champions Network (for arts board members), and Arts in the Parks. She introduced significant funding programs, including the Newcomer Artist Awards, Indigenous Arts Awards, and Black Arts funding. Under her leadership, the Mayor's Evening for the Arts became Toronto's highest-grossing arts fundraising event.

Before her role at TAC, Claire's career spanned the arts as an actor, theatre producer, festival director, and executive director of arts organizations, including Comus Music Theatre and Tapestry Opera. As a principal of Brazen Overtures, she led development and communication campaigns, including the restoration and relaunch of Toronto's iconic Elgin and Winter Garden Theatres.

Claire has served on numerous boards and was the Founding Chair of the Association for Opera in Canada, Vice Chair of Opera America, Founding President of Creative Trust, and Co-Chair of Toronto's Expo Canada 2025 Bid. She is currently Vice Chair of Tapestry Opera's Board and an advisor for Arts, Media, and Entertainment at the Schulich School of Business. Her contributions to the arts have earned her numerous accolades, including Canada's Meritorious Service Medal (M.S.M.), the M. Joan Chalmers Award for Arts Administration, and recognition as a "Woman of Distinction" by the Urban Land Institute and the Association for Opera in Canada.

ABOUT CANADA'S THEATRE MUSEUM

Inspired by the vision of theatre critic Herbert Whittaker, Canada's Theatre Museum was founded in 1991 by a dedicated group of volunteers. We invite the world to explore and be inspired by the past, present, and future of Canadian performing arts.

We would like to acknowledge the generous support of individuals, families, and foundations that inspire future generations of theatre artists and audiences. The Museum receives key operational funding from The William and Nona Heaslip Foundation and the Ontario Arts Council, an agency of the Government of Ontario.

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