



SATURDAY, MARCH 1ST 2008 • SAMEDI LE 1^{ER} MARS 2008
TORONTO CENTRE FOR THE ARTS • CENTRE DES ARTS DE TORONTO

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GREGORY CHARLES TO HOST CANADIAN SONGWRITERS HALL OF FAME 5th ANNUAL GALA

*Top Canadian musical talent to perform tributes to
2008 inductees on March 1 at Toronto Centre for the Arts*

Toronto, ON – Multi-talented Canadian entertainer **Gregory Charles** is set to host the fifth annual Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame/ Le Panthéon des Auteurs et Compositeurs Canadiens (CHSF/PACC) Gala on March 1st 2008. The evening of celebration promises to be another showcase of outstanding musical talent, including performances by Canadian siblings **Martha** and **Rufus Wainwright**, Canadian jazz vocalist **Dione Taylor**, up and coming artist **Suzie McNeil**, gospel choir **The Faith Chorale**, renowned pianist **Oliver Jones**, Quebec group **Les Respectables**, reunited girl group **Toulouse** and Quebec singer **Boom Desjardins**.

“We are delighted to be welcoming such a variety of talent to the 2008 gala. From folk to jazz, the performances will showcase the wide-ranging accomplishments of Canadian songwriters and the 2008 inductees,” said Dominic Denny, CSHF Executive Director and Co-Executive Producer. “This is an evening of tribute and celebration not to be missed.”

Dione Taylor, the Faith Chorale and Oliver Jones will take to the stage to honour the late Oscar Peterson, while Martha and Rufus Wainwright will perform a rendition of their aunt Anna McGarrigle’s classic *Heart Like A Wheel*. Suzie McNeil will return to perform her acclaimed rendition of Les Emmerson’s *Signs*, as first heard at the CSHF Press Concert. Les Respectables will perform a modern version of Raoul Duguay’s *La Bittt à Tibi*, while Boom Desjardins will honour Claude Dubois with his rendition of *Le Labrador*. Reunited group Toulouse will honour the late Georges Thurston with a performance of his hit *Aimes-tu la vie comme moi?*

The annual event honours outstanding accomplishments of Canadian songwriters and those who have significantly contributed to their legacy. The 2008 inductees include **Alex Kramer**, one of the most highly regarded

songwriters of the big-band era, **Paul Anka**, known for his beautiful ballads and chart-topping hits. Also inducted in 2008 are Francophone artists **André Lejeune**, a prolific Francophone songwriter as well as **Claude Dubois**, whose songs have been covered by French artists around the world.

In addition, the evening will see the induction of the late **Oscar Peterson** remembered with the Frank Davies Legacy Award, recognizing his work and its significant impact on the development and recognition of Canadian songwriters both nationally and internationally. This induction will be all the more poignant as it had been planned with Mr. Peterson in the months leading up to his passing.

Broadcast partner CBC Radio will air two programs on CBC Radio 2 on March 2nd. At 7pm there will be a special interview with Paul Anka, followed by the broadcast of the Gala at 8pm. In addition, on March 3rd CBC Radio One will air one-hour specials at 2pm and 10pm. CBC Television will broadcast a one-hour special on Monday, March 3 at 7pm featuring salutes to Paul Anka and Oscar Peterson.

Additional performers and presenters will be announced in the coming weeks. Tickets are available via ticketmaster.ca or 416-870-8000 and can be purchased for \$75 or \$200. Lower priced tickets give patrons access to the Gala only, while \$200 tickets grant access to the Gala, the post show dessert reception and the silent auction.

About CSHF Performers:

Gregory Charles

Trained as a classical concert pianist, Gregory Charles is an accomplished performer known for his successful one-man show *Black and White*. The show debuted in 2002 and was part biographical cabaret and part musical interpretation of the audience's requests. The show traveled across the country, conquering the Bell Centre in Montreal, the Elgin and Winter Garden Theatres in Toronto and then heading south to the Beacon Theatre in New York. Charles' album *Gospel Live in Black and White* was released following the show and is certified gold, selling more than 75,000 copies. In 2005, Charles became the ambassador and artistic director for the Mondial Choral Loto-Quebec which presents a 15,000 person choir to an audience of 500,000. In October of 2006, the album *I Think of You* was released, selling nearly 350,000 copies and in October of 2007, Charles premiere French album was released, "Loin de la Lumiere."

Boom Desjardins

Montreal native Boom Desjardins was first introduced to the Canadian listening public in the late '90s as a member of the québécois rock group La Chicane. The band first formed when he and guitarist Alain Villeneuve put their heads together in 1993, not joined by bandmates Martin Bedard, Christian LeGault and Eric LeMieux until 1996. The band released their debut record in 1999, entitled *En Catimini*, which went to win a JUNO Award and achieve double-platinum status. The band's follow-up disc, *Disparu*, is met with similar success, garnering invitations to perform internationally. In November 2004 enthusiastic fans welcome Boom Desjardins' self-titled album debut, which sold more than 130,000 copies. The record's

consistent presence on national charts, followed by a sold-out concert tour, was testament to the project's strength and artist's trajectory.

Faith Chorale

For over a decade Sharon Riley & Faith Chorale has established itself as Canada's premier gospel choir. Its name speaks volumes about a journey which has been characterized by struggle, longevity, and untold blessings the stuff of unshakeable faith. The milestone of being Canada's first gospel group to sign an international contract is amplified by the long list of awards and achievements the choir has amassed in over a decade of ground-breaking work. It has graced both the big screen and small screen, appearing in the blockbuster film *The Blues Brothers 2000* and HBO's *Light to the Power of Two*. Working alongside Paul Schaffer, Sharon co-arranged the soundtrack John The Revelator for *The Blues Brothers 2000*, and she along with the choir appeared on the Grammy Award-nominated soundtrack alongside the likes of Aretha Franklin, Erykah Badu, James Brown, and Eric Clapton.

Oliver Jones

Oliver Jones has enjoyed a six-decade musical career, beginning his training in classical music and becoming one of the finest Canadian jazz pianists. Known for his acrobatic piano stunts and his ability to play anything from rock and roll to swing, Jones rose to even higher fame with his jazz recording *Live at Biddles*. His illustrious career is celebrated by the Martin Luther King Jr. Award for contributions to the Black Community in Canada. In 1993 he received the Order of Quebec and the Order of Canada in 1994 for "outstanding achievement in the arts." In 2005, he received the Governor General's Performing Arts Award for lifetime artistic achievement. A personal friend of the late Oscar Peterson, Oliver is inspired by his friend's work, citing Peterson as a major influence in his musical career.

Suzie McNeil

Suzie is a musical Jack-of-all-trades. These have ranged from live shows beside some of North America's top acts (Alan Frew, Ronnie Hawkins, Jeff Healey, Dave Navarro, P!nk, INXS) to consummate professionalism tracking in the studio (Nick Lachey, Jesse McCartney) to commercial jingles (Marineland, Ontario), to performing in front of crowds of up to 200,000 people. At the end of summer 2005, Suzie was the last woman standing on CBS television's reality series *Rockstar:INXS*. At the end of July 2006, Suzie finished singing back-up vocals for P!nk on her North American tour. She has just finished starring in the Toronto Debut of Queen's *We Will Rock You* as the role of Oz. She released her debut album in April 2007, *Broken & Beautiful* which she recorded with a-list producer Marti Frederiksen which feature the Top-20 National hits: *Hung Up* and *Believe*. Suzie's song *Believe* has also been chosen by Bell Canada to be a ramp up to the 2010 Olympics.

Dione Taylor

A Canadian jazz vocalist, Dione was trained at the prestigious jazz program at the Humber College of Applied Arts and Technology, winning the program award for Outstanding Vocal Performance. She was also selected as one of only six jazz students from around the world for the "Jazz and the New Generation" program. Taylor has performed at the White House for the President and the First Lady in honour of Black Music Month, and has also performed for Queen Elizabeth II. Her sophomore album *I Love Being Here With You* was released in April 2007 and features her rich and smoky sound in a decidedly jazz album.

Martha Wainwright

Martha is the daughter of folk legends Loudon Wainwright III and Kate McGarrigle and sister of acclaimed singer songwriter Rufus Wainwright. She took the first step in her own recording career in 1998 when she contributed her song "Year of the Dragon" to her mother and aunt's album *The McGarrigle Hour*. The same year she started singing back-up for her brother both live and on record. In 2002 she released a self-titled EP, followed by an EP entitled *Bloody Motherf*cking As*hole*, which was received with critical acclaim. She has appeared in Martin Scorsese's *The Aviator*, and joined her brother Rufus Wainwright during his fall 2004 UK tour.

Rufus Wainwright

Affectionately referred to by Elton John as "the greatest songwriter on the planet" and praised by The New York Times for his "genuine originality," Rufus Wainwright has established himself as one of the great male vocalists and songwriters of his generation by carving out his own singular sound. He has released eight albums and two DVDs to-date as well as appearing on numerous soundtracks and compilations, and collaborating with artists like Elton John, David Byrne and Teddy Thompson. Rufus' latest album is a live recording from his Carnegie Hall concert titled, *Rufus Does Judy At Carnegie Hall*, and has been released concurrently with a live DVD (*Rufus! Rufus! Rufus! Does Judy! Judy! Judy!*) capturing his celebrated Judy Garland tribute performance at the London Palladium earlier this year. His previous album, *Release The Stars*, went Gold in Canada and the U.K.

About the Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame:

The Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame (CSHF) /Le Panthéon des Auteurs et Compositeurs Canadiens is a collaboration of the Canadian Music Publishers Association (CMPA) and the Songwriters Association of Canada (S.A.C.) with the assistance of the Société professionnelle des auteurs et des compositeurs du Québec (SPACQ). The CSHF's generous founding contributors are: the Canadian Music Publishers Association (CMPA), EMI Music Canada, the Foundation Assisting Canadian Talent on Recordings (FACTOR), SOCAN, Sony BMG Music Canada, Universal Music Canada, and Warner Music Canada. The CSHF acknowledges the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Music Fund for this project.

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