



## Sound designer Deanna H. Choi honoured with 2020 Pauline McGibbon Award

Ontario Arts Council  
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Toronto-based sound designer **Deanna H. Choi** is the recipient of the 2020 Pauline McGibbon Award. The announcement was made this morning during the news conference announcing the nominations for the Dora Mavor Moore Awards, which was held online through the [Dora Awards YouTube channel](#).

Deanna creates original music, sonic environments and sound reinforcement systems for stage, screen and interactive media. Stemming from her post-secondary studies in behavioural neuroscience, she is inspired by human psychology and how evolution, memory and social dynamics influence an audience's perception of music and sound.

Deanna graduated from Queen's University (Psychology, Drama) and The Royal Conservatory of Music (National Gold Medal, Violin Performance). She also completed artist residencies at the Banff Centre, Stanford University, fu-GEN Theatre, the National Arts Centre, and the National Youth Orchestra of Canada.

Deanna's designs for plays and musicals have taken her across Canada. Her Toronto credits include Soulpepper Theatre, Tarragon Theatre, Coal Mine Theatre, Necessary Angel Theatre Company, Crow's Theatre, Factory Theatre, Theatre Passe Muraille and Nightwood Theatre.

Her work has been heard across Ontario at the Shaw Festival, the Stratford Festival, the Grand Theatre (London), the Thousand Islands Playhouse and the Blyth Festival. Nationwide, her work

has been featured at Neptune Theatre (Halifax, N.S.), Theatre New Brunswick (Fredericton, N.B.), Prairie Theatre Exchange (Winnipeg, Man.) and Theatre Calgary.

She still gets goosebumps from the tingling anticipation at the top of cue-to-cue, when the stage manager calls, “LX one, sound one – GO.”

The jury was unanimous in selecting Deanna for this award. As they noted, “Deanna’s work is uniquely informed by her combined background in the arts (as a classical musician and composer) and academics (in behavioral neuroscience) – and we love the articulation of humanity in her artistic practice. She is also an excellent collaborator, bringing passion and skill to every production team, while also working to strengthen the theatre community.”

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 medal designed by Dora de Pédery-Hunt. The award is given each year by the Province of Ontario through the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries and is administered by the Ontario Arts Council. The 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.

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 sound designer Emily Porter (Toronto), lighting designer Michael Walton (Stratford) and costume and set designer Joanna Yu (Stratford). Previous winners include scenic artist Ksenia Ivanova (2019) and theatre director Sarah Conn (2018). Full list of Pauline McGibbon Award laureates.

Within the Department of Psychology at Queen's Deanna was associated with the labs of Lola Cuddy, Niko Troje, and Hans Dringenberg.

[Read the original Ontario Arts Council article](#)