

2009 Barbara Hamilton Award Winner: Colin Mochrie



2009 Barbara Hamilton Award winner Colin Mochrie

Toronto, June 3, 2009... The Barbara Hamilton Memorial Award was inaugurated in 1996 and is given to a Canadian artist who demonstrates excellence in the performing arts and is dedicated to advocating and being an ambassador for the arts in Canada. The Barbara Hamilton Memorial Award is sponsored by the City of Toronto, and the recipient is awarded with a scroll and a cheque for \$1,000 from the City.

The Award was established to recognize Barbara Hamilton's illustrious career and her remarkable canon of work. A list of previous winners reads as a who's who of

legendary Canadian performers: Don Harron, George Luscombe, John Neville, Douglas Campbell, Mervyn Blake, Charmion King, Maureen Forrester, Eric Peterson, William Hutt, Martha Burns, Albert Schultz, Karen Kain and Fiona Reid.

The winner of this year's Barbara Hamilton Memorial Award is Colin Mochrie, an outstanding advocate for Canadian culture and one of Canada's finest comedic actors as well as one of the most accomplished improvisers in the world. He is one of very few to have carved out a celebrity career based in improv and is widely regarded as a living legend of the form.

Mochrie is a household name across North America – the result of appearing in every episode of the American television show *Whose Line is it Anyway?* in addition to seven years as a regular on the original British Channel 4 version which popularized live improvisation. After enjoying international success working in London and Los Angeles, Mochrie returned to Toronto where he has maintained an exceptional career in film, television and the stage.

After studying at Langara College's Studio 58 in Vancouver, he moved to Toronto in 1986 where he became involved with *The Second City* and went on to direct the National Touring Company for three years. Mochrie's resume is a long list of American and Canadian television shows including the above *Whose Line is it Anyway?* as well as *The Drew Carey Show*, *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*, *Getting Along Famously*, *Blackfly*, *Are You Smarter than a Canadian 5th Grader*, and *Burnt Toast*, a series of eight comedic mini-operas produced by Rhombus Media. He has won two Canadian Comedy Awards for live improvisation, a Gemini and a Writers Guild of Canada Award for his work on CBC-TV's *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*.

Throughout his career, he has remained a generous, supportive member of the entertainment community, lending his time and fame in support of the industry's success. He currently advocates on behalf of ACTRA members for CRTC regulation and promotion of Canadian online content, and has lent his celebrity to countless charities and causes including *Gilda's Club*, *Sick Kids Hospital* and *Performing Arts Lodge*. He performs with and encourages smaller shows and producers like *The Sketchersons* and *The Bad Dog Theatre*, helping to increase the profile of live comedic performance.

He regularly appears on improv shows and galas throughout the city. He and longtime improv partner Brad Sherwood tour An Evening with Colin and Brad across North America. The duo hosted the Press Correspondents' Dinner with the US President in 2007. In 2010, Colin will star in the Canadian Stage Company's production of Art.

The Barbara Hamilton Memorial Award is administered by the Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts (TAPA). The Barbara Hamilton Memorial Award selection committee is Martha Burns, Jacoba Knaapen, Eric Peterson and Jim Roe.

TAPA is an arts service organization that represents nearly 200 professional theatre, dance and opera companies in the City of Toronto, and works to create an environment in which the performing arts may flourish. In addition to the Dora Mavor Moore Awards, programs and services offered by TAPA include: T.O. TIX – Toronto's One-Stop Ticket Shop at Yonge-Dundas Square, the Go Live Toronto marketing campaign and the Commercial Theatre Development Fund. For more information visit www.tapa.ca.