

## The Dream at Island Lake among 2019 Arts and Culture awards

By Marni Walsh

The audience at the Orangeville Opera House last Thursday (Sept. 26) erupted into cheers when it was announced, "The award for Creative Cultural Event of the Year goes to The Dream at Island Lake."

Theatre Orangeville's groundbreaking celebration of ability in their biggest production to date, Shakespeare's romantic comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, "was a labour of love that involved over 100 people," said Artistic Director David Naim. He proudly stated, "The entire country looks to this community for leadership in the arts."

The Arts and Culture Awards "kicked-off" the 10th annual Culture Days in Orangeville. The evening celebrated local art and culture and recognized outstanding contributions made by established and emerging artists, across all mediums, as well as contributing businesses and organizations. Prior to the awards, guests enjoyed hor d'oeuvres, listened to music by award-winning saxophonist Ryan Grist, and toured artistic displays from various nominees.

Wayne Townsend, local historian, lover of the arts, and Master of Ceremonies for the evening, told the audience, "The judges were amazed by the talent of Dufferin County." Judging was handled by an "experienced independent panel from outside Dufferin County."

Dufferin County Poet Laureate Harry Posner gave readings of some of his poems, declaring, "give me a word and I will give you a world." He reminded the audience that it was the "artist's job to inspire the world, to point to the future, to have a vision, and to demonstrate another way forward." He added, "To create is a privilege" - one that should not be "squandered."

The Town of Orangeville Economic Development & Culture Department announced that "several nominations were received for eight award categories." The winners of the 2019 Arts and Culture Awards announced September 26th include:

Established Artist of the Year, Beckie Morris; Emerging Artist of the Year, Sara Rose; Student Artist of the Year, Darcey Baker; Arts Educator of the Year, Christa Davison; Community Arts Volunteer Advocate, Teresa & Ken Huntley; Community Impact by an Organization, Orangeville Blues & Jazz Festival; Community Impact by a Business, Maggiolly Art; Creative Cultural Event, The Dream at Island Lake.

Upon receiving her award as Arts Educator of the year, teacher Christa Davison said, "Art is one of the purest elements in human happiness." She warned that the Provincial Government's "hyper emphasis on maths and sciences would "come at a tremendous cost." She noted, "The arts are on the chopping block...I will fight fiercely for them...I know my students will too."

Mayor Sandy Brown congratulated all of the nominees saying, "Our arts and culture sector helps to strengthen our overall community, enriching our identity, our quality of life and our economic well-being."

He added, "We will be looking for a Provincial representative with lots of support for the arts."