

# MCDERMOTT

THE EUGENE MCDERMOTT AWARD IN THE ARTS AT MIT  
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY  
77 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE  
BUILDING E15-205  
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139-4307

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## Multidisciplinary Performance and Media Artist Robert Lepage 2012 Recipient of the Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT

Robert Lepage's Award and Residency at MIT April 24 to 26, 2012

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Cambridge, MA, October 27, 2011 – The Council for the Arts at MIT is pleased to announce that **Robert Lepage** is the recipient of the 2012 Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT, which includes an \$80,000 cash prize and a campus residency. Renowned as a director, filmmaker, playwright, and actor, Lepage is currently directing *Der Ring des Nibelungen* at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. He also has created two *Cirque du Soleil* productions and *The Image Mill*<sup>TM</sup>, a spectacular architectural illumination and urban projection. The award celebrates innovative talents in all arts disciplines and is one of the most generous cultural honors in the U.S. The official announcement will be made at the Council's 39<sup>th</sup> annual meeting at MIT on October 27.

Lepage's diverse and expansive body of work defies categorization. He and his creative team **Ex Machina** have made dazzlingly original contributions to theatre, opera, film, stagecraft, circus performance, and public art. In his most recent work, Lepage transformed Wagner's *Ring* cycle with an adventurous and technically sophisticated set in a groundbreaking production—the most ambitious the Metropolitan Opera has ever attempted. Its centerpiece is a monumental platform for digital projections and scenic effects dubbed "The Machine," whose planks rise, fall, ripple, or splay around a central axis to create dramatic simulations of Wagner's imaginary cosmos. *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* were presented last season. *Siegfried* will be performed October 27, November 1 and 5, 2011, and *Die Götterdämmerung* in January 27 and 31 as well as on February 3, 7 and 11, 2012. The complete cycle will be presented in April and May, 2012.

During Lepage's residency at MIT, he will be honored with the McDermott Award during a public ceremony on Thursday, April 26, 2012, which will include a discussion of his work with Peter Gelb, general manager of the Metropolitan Opera.

**ROBERT LEPAGE AT MIT**  
<http://arts.mit.edu/mcdermott>  
**RESIDENCY AT MIT:**  
April 24 – 26, 2012

**Thursday, April 26, 2012, 5pm**  
**Robert Lepage, in dialogue with**  
**Peter Gelb, General Manager,**  
**Metropolitan Opera**  
Free and open to the public  
Kresge Auditorium  
48 Massachusetts Avenue,  
Cambridge, MA 02139

*Further details about the residency will be announced in February 2012.*

**Related Event:**  
*The Andersen Project*  
Ex Machina/Robert Lepage  
ArtsEmerson: The World on Stage  
Cutler Majestic Theatre, Boston  
**March 24 to April 1, 2012**  
<http://www.artsemerson.org/>

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## From Robert Lepage:

“The survival of the art of theatre depends on its capacity to reinvent itself by embracing new tools and new languages. In a way, innovators in both arts and sciences walk on parallel paths: they have to keep their minds constantly open to new possibilities as their imagination is the best instrument to expand the limits of their fields. I am thus deeply honored to be recognized by MIT, an institution committed to facing the challenges of our era and imagining a better future.”

## From MIT Associate Provost and Ford International Professor of History Philip S. Khoury:

“MIT recognizes in Lepage an exemplary commitment to experimentation, risk-taking, and technical innovation in the service of artistic production. Lepage’s collaborative approach to artistic creation and embrace of unscripted encounters between scientists and playwrights will resonate in MIT’s culture, and we look forward to stimulating interactions with faculty, students, and researchers during his visit to MIT next April.”

## About Robert Lepage

Versatile in every form of theater craft, Robert Lepage is equally talented as a director, playwright, actor, and filmmaker. His work, especially through use of cinematic special effects and new technologies, integrates seemingly unrelated elements to re-imagine for the 21<sup>st</sup> century the ritual origins of theatre in communal life, storytelling, and personal and collective memories.

Lepage’s creative and original approach to theater emerged in the 1980s with productions of *Circulations*, *The Dragons’ Trilogy*, *Vinci*, *Polygraph*, and *Tectonic Plates* in Canada. From 1989 to 1993, he served as artistic director of the Théâtre français at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. With *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* in 1992, he became the first North American to direct a Shakespeare play at the Royal National Theatre in London.

Ex Machina, the multidisciplinary production company that Lepage founded in 1994, became a turning point in his career. In that year, he made his first feature film, *Le Confessionnal*, followed in 2000 by *Possible Worlds*, his first feature film written in English, and a film adaptation of his successful play *The Far Side of the Moon*, in 2003. In 1997, he opened La Caserne, an avant-garde production center in Québec City devoted to the premise that new artistic forms will emerge from a comingling of the performing arts (dance, opera, theatre) with the recording arts (film, video, and multimedia). The range of cultural forms Lepage explored grew. He directed Peter Gabriel’s music tours *Secret World* (1993-94) and *Growing Up* (2003-04), designed the exhibition *Métissages* for the Musée de la civilisation in Québec City, and directed two shows for *Cirque du Soleil* -- *KÀ* in 2005, a resident show at MGM Grand in Las Vegas; and *TOTEM* in 2010, currently touring North America and the U.K. For Québec City’s 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2008, Lepage and Ex Machina created the largest architectural projection ever achieved, *The Image Mill*<sup>TM</sup> and, in the following year, *Aurora Borealis*, a permanent lighting installation for Québec’s harbor inspired by the northern lights.

Lepage’s entrance into the opera world began in 1993, when he staged the successful double bill of *Bluebeard’s Castle* and *Erwartung* at the Canadian Opera Company. He continued with stunning productions in Japan, Paris, New York, and Toronto, including *The Damnation of Faust*

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(1990), 1984 (2005), *The Rake's Progress* (2007), and *The Nightingale and Other short Fables* (2009). His pioneering approach to Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* cycle at the Metropolitan Opera over two seasons, beginning in September 2010 and culminating in May 2012, is captivating audiences and generating discussion among artists and critics in all genres.

## About the Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT

Lepage joins a group of distinguished recipients of the Eugene McDermott Award, including architects Diller + Scofidio, writer Junot Díaz, and conductor Gustavo Dudamel. Other honorees include architect Santiago Calatrava, playwright Suzan-Lori Parks, filmmaker Isaac Julien, and composer Tan Dun. Many of the recipients of this award are leaders in their fields at the time of their selection, while others are still rising to prominence.

In addition to the \$80,000 cash prize, the Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT offers its recipient a campus residency. The goal is to provide unparalleled access to the creative energy and cutting-edge research found in the MIT community and to connect the award winner with departments, laboratories, and research centers throughout the Institute in ways that are mutually enlightening. Further details on Lepage's residency will be announced in February 2012.

Established in 1974 by the Council for the Arts at MIT, the Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT is bestowed upon individuals whose artistic trajectory and body of work indicate that they will achieve the highest distinction in their fields. The award, which recognizes Eugene McDermott, cofounder of Texas Instruments and longtime friend and benefactor of MIT, reflects MIT's commitment to risk-taking, problem solving, and the idea of connecting creative minds across disciplines. <http://arts.mit.edu/mcdermott>

## About the Council for the Arts at MIT

Founded in 1972 by MIT President Jerome B. Wiesner, the Council for the Arts provides crucial financial support for countless performances, exhibitions, arts facilities, and academic and co-curricular programs at MIT. The Council recognizes that creativity and excellence are at the core of MIT's identity, and its programs uphold the Institute's commitment to the arts as an integral part of an MIT education. All the Council's work is self-supported; its programs are made possible through the generous annual contributions of Council members and friends. Appointed by the President of MIT, Council members continuously fulfill their mission "to foster the arts at MIT and to act as a catalyst for the development of a broadly based, highly participatory program in the arts." <http://arts.mit.edu/about/council>

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