

Junos honour living legends

By RYAN MOFFATT
Epoch Times Staff

The Juno Awards last weekend showcased a number of Canada's newest and brightest stars while also paying homage to some of the country's living legends.

Representing the finer characteristics of many of Canada's top stars, two artists, living legends themselves, stood out as outstanding ambassadors for Canadian music.

Renowned worldwide, Sarah McLachlan and Buffy Sainte-Marie were among the artists honoured for their achievements and contributions to Canadian music. Sainte-Marie won for Aboriginal Artist of the Year and McLachlan was given the Alan Waters Humanitarian Award.

Celebrating her 20-year anniversary as one Canada's leading voices, McLachlan accepted the Alan Waters Humanitarian Award which recognizes artists whose humanitarian contributions have positively enhanced Canada's social fabric.

McLachlan has been a champion of humanitarian causes for most of her career, never failing to express gratitude or hesitant to contribute.

"It's important for all individuals to use the gifts they have to their full capacity. Whether I was a successful entertainer or not, I would be doing a lot of what I have been doing. I feel responsibility as a human being first and foremost to give back," she said.

McLachlan visited Thailand and Cambodia with Much Music in 1991 as part of a World Vision aid project. It was there that her eyes were opened to the suffering in the world. She came back with a renewed sense of gratitude and a strong urge to give back.

Using her profile to benefit charities and organizations, she is the spokesperson for the BC Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, for which she has helped raise \$20 million in donations thanks to a television adoption campaign that used her song "Angel." Her successful Lilith Fair tours raised \$7 million for charity.

Buffy St Marie is an artist whose legacy has influenced Canadian music for over 40 years. Born in Saskatchewan, Buffy spent time in New York's storied Greenwich Village forging the scene that would become the hippie movement of the 1960's.

Along with Leonard Cohen and Joni Mitchell, she put her Canadian stamp on some of the most important music of the century. Her song "Universal Soldier" is still as relevant today as it was in those heady days when it became an anthem for the anti war movement.

Part of the student movement of the 60's, Buffy also worked for the Obama campaign. Her advice for up-and-coming artists goes like this:

"Be smart, take care of yourself and your gift. So often it's easy to



Sarah McLachlan was given the 2009 Allan Waters Humanitarian Award at the Juno Awards Gala at the Westin Bayshore Conference Centre.

get detoured with all the temptations and lack of stability. Take a bath now and then and don't miss the airplane. If you are a singer, learn how to dance."

Having forged her own path and broken through racial barriers, Buffy has seen aboriginal music emerge from the shadows and onto the world stage.

"I've been doing this for over 40

years. When I was first travelling I was the only aboriginal person I would see on the concert stage. And for me it has always been two things: I have this wonderful shiny world in show biz, but also from the very beginning all the way through until now I've spent time on the reservations. Stuff that used to be seen only on the reservation is now seen by the larger public."



Buffy Sainte-Marie was awarded Aboriginal Album of the Year at the Juno Awards Gala on March 28 at the Westin Bayshore Conference Centre.

At the annual Juno's Songwriters Circle that took place before the main event, Buffy garnered the loudest applause and won accolades from fellow musicians like Hawksley Workman, who seemed genuinely reverent of the enigmatic singer.

Theatre review: '1984'

By JUDD HOLLANDER
Special to the Epoch Times

NEW YORK—Godlight Theatre Company, which has a history of presenting riveting productions of novels almost impossible to stage, hits another home run with a powerful presentation of George Orwell's novel of the terribly oppressive society: "1984."

The city of Oceania in 1984 is a happy and productive place—that is, if you believe the telescreen broadcasts which continuously proclaim how the city has surpassed yet another production quota; that their enemies are in full retreat on the battlefield; and that being part of a collective whole is what everyone desires. The telescreens are always on in every home and every public gathering place. As Winston Smith (Gregory Konow) explains, "You can turn them down but you can't turn them off." Oceania is ruled by the mysterious entity known as Big Brother and there seems to be nowhere he cannot see you or know what you're thinking about.

Winston is a middle-aged, nondescript man, who works as an editor at a news gathering organization (all content is very heavily censored of course). But as time has gone on and more and more societal restrictions have been put into place (such as

the latest dictionary editions, which remove words from the English language instead of adding them), Winston has begun to exhibit a sort of rebellious streak—like buying objects from an antique shop that have no useful purpose, other than that they look nice, or writing down private thoughts in his diary.

Things radically change for Winston when he meets Julia (Enid Cortes), a beautiful young woman who outwardly follows the party line, but secretly and continually flouts the rules, particularly the no-sex pledge she has taken. Soon the two are frequently stealing away for periods of passionate bliss and very quickly fall in love. As Winston is beginning to revel in his newfound personal freedom, he and Julia make contact with a shadowy resistance movement, one determined to bring down Big Brother. But soon after the two pledge their loyalty to this underground, they are betrayed, forcing Winston into a mental, physical, and ideological battle for his very soul—for Big Brother wants nothing more than for Winston to love him unconditionally, no matter what it takes for that goal to be achieved.

Alan Lyddiard's adaptation of Orwell's novel (which contains at least some links to Russia under Stalin's regime) has brought forth a

very chilling tale. Any hope of individuality and freedom is little more than a pipe dream—Big Brother is always 10 steps ahead of any form of protest, and one never knows who to trust. At the same time, those in charge (such as an official icily played by Dustin Olson) know that killing all who resist only leads to the creation of martyrs. What they seek instead is the crushing embrace of conformity and the blindness of obedience.

Interestingly, the characters are played in a way that is often emotionally flat, something that makes the play work all the more as it is in keeping with a society that discourages free thought or feelings of any kind. Indeed, some of the most effective sequences are the matter-of-fact discussions by some of the population, such as Syme (Aaron Paternoster), who is delighted with his dictionary work in eliminating words no longer considered useful, or Parsons (Nick Paglino) recalling how his 7-year-old daughter informed on a man because he was wearing a strange-looking pair of shoes ("He was probably a foreigner").

Joe Tantalò's direction is letter perfect, keeping the story moving smoothly, and the tension ever-increasing. Also strong are Hachi Yu's choreography and Rick Sordelet's fight direction, showing events ranging from passionate encounters, to deadly confrontations, to the endless speeches given by the actors playing the telescreens (Deanna McGovern, Katherine Boynton, Sammy Tunis, Scarlett Thiele).

Konow is perfectly cast as Smith, his ordinary-looking appearance suggesting an everyman in a society where the alternative to going along with the masses is more terrible than death. This is someone, old before his time, who finally finds something to believe in, only to have his few moments of independence cruelly snatched away, possibly forever.

Cortes works well as Julia, her youthful freshness and appeal offering Smith, and the audience, a few minutes hope for something good to come out of this world. Another standout is Olson who soullessly spouts the party line, believing in it with every fibre of his being, as he calmly and sadistically tries to get others to accept Big Brother.

The set, (Maruti Evans, production design; Dominic Barone, associate set design), basically a bare stage with a few props, appropriately fits the emptiness of the society and bleak future depicted. Original music and sound design by Andrew Recinos, and lighting (Wilburn Bonnell, associate lighting design) are excellent.

Also in the cast are Michael Tranzilli and Michael Shimkin.

Judd Hollander is the New York correspondent for the London newspaper *The Stage*.

India's Nobel laureate dreamt of a borderless world

By SUSHEELA HEGDE
Epoch Times Staff

Rabindranath Tagore, Asia's first Nobel laureate, stands as one of the cultural icons of the world. His literary works, distinguished by profundity of thought and beauty of expression, have thoroughly influenced the collective intellect of the Indian subcontinent and have immensely impacted Western thinkers.

Born to a leader of a revolutionary Hindu sect in the western region of Bengal in British-ruled India in 1867, Tagore was educated at home until the age of 17. He was then sent to England for further education, but midway in the studies he returned home.

Apparently the formal format of education did not sit well with him. Years later in 1901, he established an open-air school at Shantiniketan which was developed into an international university named Vishwa Bharati after India's independence. This school, which he envisioned as an Indian alternative to the colonial education, became his centre of activity for the next 40 years until his death in 1941.

Tagore's multi-faceted talent found its way in songs, poems, plays, short stories, novels, essays, letters, as well as paintings and drawings. His works reflect a deep bond between humans and nature. More often than not, he appealed for universal peace, love and harmony.

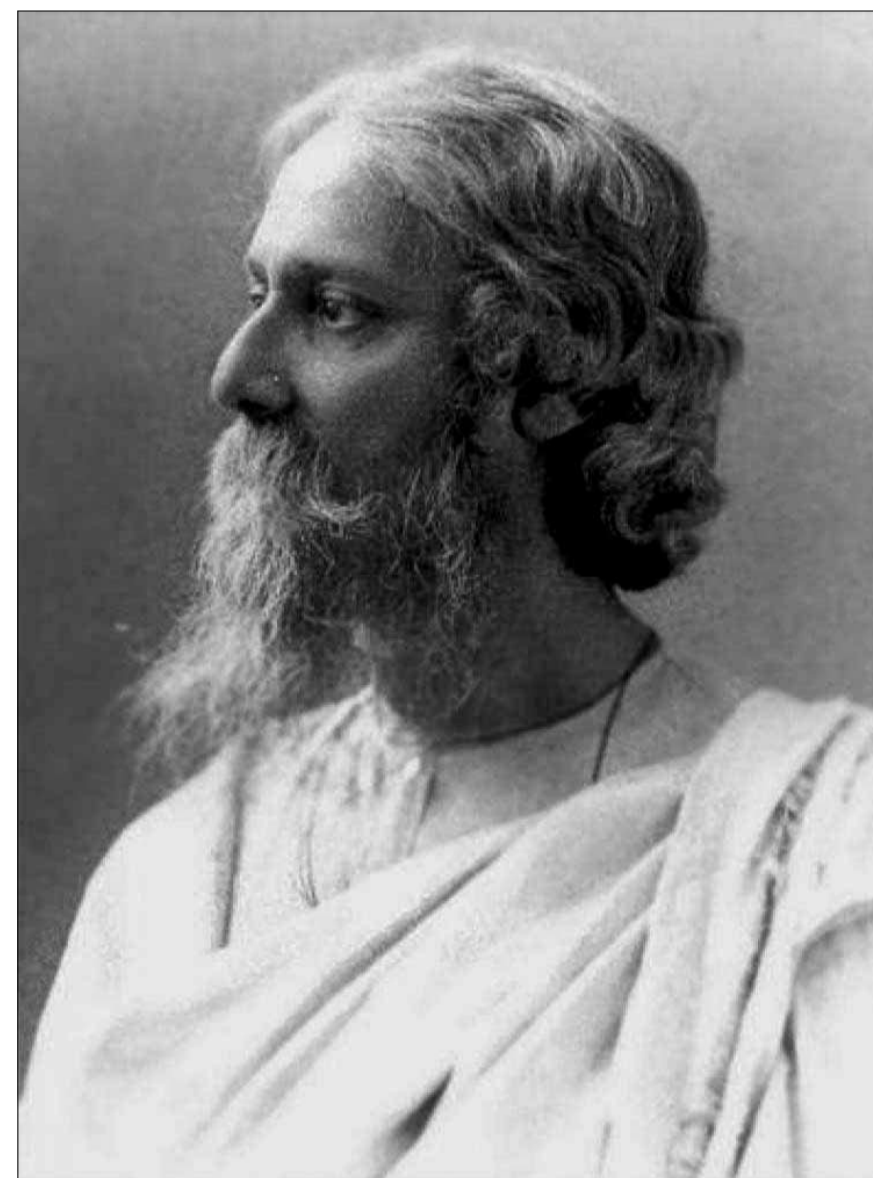
Until his middle years, his influence was mostly confined to the Indian subcontinent, especially to his native Bengal region, as his works were only published in his native language, Bengali. India was and still is a multilingual country in which different languages are spoken in different regions.

It was his own English translation of the spiritual lyrics from his poetic tome, titled *Gitanjali*, in 1912 that opened the floodgates of his luminous poetic talent to the western world. The awe-struck West conferred the highest honour for literature, a Nobel Prize, on *Gitanjali* in 1913.

Gitanjali is an anthology of songs offered to the Infinite. The poet's meditation and contemplation on God, man, and nature flowed into more than 100 poems in the book.

Following his Nobel Prize-winning book, Tagore translated several of his other works into English, which helped his fame reach a new global height. He traveled across continents on lecture tours and friendship tours and became a key figure in the spiritual and cultural heritage of India.

The British government honoured the philosopher poet with Knight-



Indian poet, philosopher, and winner of the 1913 Nobel Prize for Literature, Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) wrote chiefly on spirituality, man, and nature. PUBLIC DOMAIN

hood in 1915. However, deeply saddened by the infamous Jallianwala Bagh massacre in 1919, in which British soldiers shot dead scores of unarmed people in the northern Indian city of Amritsar, he returned the honour.

Tagore was a close friend to Mahatma Gandhi, who was leading the famous nationalist movement against British rule in the country. Though seen taking part in several nationalist activities, he had dreamt of a borderless world in which discrimination based on people's nationality and race would not exist.

Though his heart grieved at the violence afflicting humanity, he always believed in the divinity hidden in the human heart. This belief was evident in his early writings. "A sudden spring breeze of religious experience for the first time came to my life and passed away leaving in my memory a direct message of spiritual reality," he wrote in "The Lord

of Life."

Tagore was also impressed by the eternal values of Buddha's teachings. For instance, aggrieved by the greed, hatred and violence seen everywhere in the world, he pleads with the Buddha for a healing touch in the poem below:

Let love's lotus with its inexhaustible treasure of honey Open its petals in thy light, O Serene, O Free, in thine immeasurable mercy and goodness Wipe away all dark stains from the heart of this earth.

Tagore envisioned a humanity free from man-made divisions. Though inspired by the Advaita Vedanta, a school of Hinduism that propagates oneness (the union of individual self with the Universal Self) as reality, Tagore refused to heed to any institutional creed or dogma. "Think clearly, feel nobly, and act rightly to become channels of truth"—this was his ideal.



Sammy Tunis as one of the omnipresent telescreen broadcasters (back) and Gregory Konow as Winston Smith (front) in a brilliant adaptation and production of George Orwell's chilling '1984.' LUCAS NOONAN