



Press Release

MIT Hosts Robert Lepage: 2012 McDermott Award in the Arts Recipient

Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT among the most generous cultural prizes in the US
Lepage campus residency includes public programs, collaboration with MIT students, and a gala

Public programs with Lepage are free:

***The Science of Illusion*, a panel with MIT researchers**

***Technology in Stagecraft and Storytelling*, a dialogue with Peter Gelb, General Manager, Metropolitan Opera**

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Cambridge, MA, March 12, 2012 -- Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) announces multidisciplinary media and performance artist Robert Lepage's residency at MIT from April 24-26 for the 2012 Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts. The McDermott Award is among the most generous cultural honors in the United States, with a cash prize and a residency at MIT including public programs, collaboration with MIT students, meetings with MIT faculty and staff, and an award gala in Lepage's honor. Lepage's versatile work in the arts has involved the innovative use of technology as exemplified by his recent direction of Wagner's *Ring* cycle at the Metropolitan Opera, as well as his work with Cirque du Soleil and Peter Gabriel, among others.

Robert Lepage said upon learning of his award:

"The survival of the art of theater 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."

Lepage will be presented with the McDermott award during a private gala held in his honor at MIT.

Public Programs:

The Science of Illusion

April 25 | [MIT Museum](#)

5:00pm Viewing of the exhibition *Holography: The Light Fantastic*

6:00pm Panel discussion with Robert Lepage and MIT researchers, in partnership with the Cambridge Science Festival

MIT Museum, 275 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge

Free and open to the public. Reservations required: arts.mit.edu/mcdermott/science-of-illusion/

Robert Lepage will participate in a panel at the MIT Museum with MIT researchers for an evening of discussion about the art and science of illusion. Lepage and his fellow panelists will discuss how the *Science of Illusion* pushes beyond the boundaries of the real and provides insights into how magical thinking drives technological innovation and the human imagination.

Panel:

Robert Lepage, 2012 Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT recipient

George Barbastathis, Singapore Research Professor of Optics and Professor of Mechanical Engineering, MIT

Graham Jones, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, MIT

Seth Riskin, Manager, Emerging Technologies and Holography/Spatial Imaging Initiative, MIT Museum

Moderator:

John Durant, Director, MIT Museum and Adjunct Professor, Science, Technology, and Society

Technology in Stagecraft and Storytelling

April 26 | [MIT Kresge Auditorium](#)

5:00pm Robert Lepage in dialogue with Peter Gelb, General Manager, Metropolitan Opera

Kresge Auditorium, 48 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge

Free and open to the public. Reservations required: arts.mit.edu/mcdermott/lepage-gelb/

Metropolitan Opera General Manager Peter Gelb joins multidisciplinary performance and media artist Robert Lepage to explore the use of technology in stagecraft and storytelling. Beginning with Lepage's new production for the Met of Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, the presentation will span an extraordinary body of work — from film to one-man performances, from Shakespeare to Peter Gabriel concerts and from Cirque du Soleil productions to spectacular architectural illuminations. The talk will include a multimedia presentation, including highlights from the Met's *Ring* cycle.

MIT residency, engagement with students and faculty

In February, Lepage conducted a workshop for MIT students devoted to exploring the distinctive creative process developed by his production company Ex Machina. Using the evocative properties of a deck of playing cards as a starting point, workshop participants developed a wide range of creative possibilities present in cards, including numbers, concepts, personal stories, and cultural histories. This workshop launched a semester-long class, and when Lepage returns to campus April 24 - 26, he will work further with the students on the projects they are developing.

Interested in all aspects of stagecraft, art, and science, Robert Lepage will have the opportunity to interact with MIT faculty and staff in the MIT Media Lab, Music and Theater Arts, and other departments. Visits to labs, a viewing of the MIT Museum's collections, and special question and answer sessions with students complete the residency.

Gala

MIT honors Robert Lepage, the 2012 Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT recipient with a spectacular gala and award ceremony (by invitation only) during his residency. Honorary Hosts and attendees include directors of major arts and cultural institutions in the Boston and New York regions as well as Canadian diplomats, members of the Council for the Arts at MIT, and leaders of the Institute.

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 21st century the ritual origins of theater in communal life, storytelling, and personal and collective memories. Lepage is currently directing *Der Ring des Nibelungen* at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. He has worked with Peter Gabriel and also created two Cirque du Soleil productions and The Image Mill™, a spectacular architectural illumination and urban projection.

About the Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT

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. arts.mit.edu/mcdermott

About the Arts at MIT

The arts at MIT connect creative minds across disciplines and encourage a lifetime of exploration and self-discovery. They are rooted in experimentation, risk-taking, and imaginative problem-solving. The arts strengthen MIT's commitment to the aesthetic, human, and social dimensions of research and innovation. Artistic knowledge and creation exemplify our motto — *mens et manus*, mind and hand. The arts are essential to MIT's mission to build a better society and meet the challenges of the 21st century. arts.mit.edu

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