

le 22 juin 2000

CCA Diplôme d'honneur

**National Arts Centre
Ottawa, Ontario**

**Acceptance Speech
Peter A. Herrndorf
Director General & CEO
National Arts Centre**

Thank you very much, Pat, for your very kind and generous introduction.

Let me begin by saying how deeply touched and honoured I am to have been chosen as this year's recipient of the Diplôme d'honneur... and to be linked, as a result, with so many of my heroes and role models in the arts: with my friend and colleague Antonine Maillet, the creator of "La Sagouine"... and the spiritual voice of Canada's Acadian community; with Robertson Davies, Celia Franca, Oscar Peterson and Charles Dutoit, who have each brought such brilliance and magic to their respective arts forms; and with Arthur Gelber and Joan Chalmers, whose passion and single minded devotion to the Canadian arts have been such an inspiration to us all.

I would, however, like to single out two other previous recipients: Lou Applebaum and Hamilton Southam.

Lou Applebaum was a friend for more than 25 years, and I was always daunted by his ability to balance his work as a composer, his activities with many of Canada's most important cultural organizations, and his determination to have an impact on Canadian public policy affecting the arts.

He wrote film scores for the NFB... he was the first Director of Music for the Stratford Festival (and worked there for 43 years)... he was instrumental in creating the National Arts Centre Orchestra... he wrote the music for numerous CBC series, including the national dream... and still found time to co-chair the Applebaum-Hébert report in the early 80's -- the first review of Canadian cultural policy since the Massey Commission Report in 1951.

He also found the time and energy ... shortly before his death... to nominate me for this Award.

It's made this moment even more special... and even more poignant. Let me say to Lou Applebaum -- clearly enough so that I'm sure he'll be able hear me -- thank you for this wonderful vote of confidence, Lou. I miss you a lot. We all miss you a lot.

I also want to express my appreciation to a man who's been an inspiration to me for much of my professional life -- the founder of the National Arts Centre, Hamilton Southam.

Hamilton Southam is a man of remarkable parts -- He's a visionary... he's a man of great taste... a man of extraordinary charm and style... a man who's enormously generous with both his time and his money... and most of all, a man who's been an eloquent and persuasive champion of the arts.

He not only created the National Arts Centre, but he imbued this organization with a clear sense of purpose... and an unwavering commitment to excellence.

He's also the only man I know who could have both an opera hall... and a luncheon dish at the NAC restaurant... named in his honour.

He's a great Canadian, and I'm proud to be following in his footsteps.

Finally, I want to express my thanks publicly to my wife and partner, Eva Czigler. She's been exceptionally supportive and understanding... while I've pursued my life long passion for broadcasting and the arts. I can't ever thank her enough.

And to all of you in the audience, thank you again for this wonderful honour.