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# LUMINATO FESTIVAL 10<sup>YEAR</sup>

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## Josephine Ridge appointed Luminato Festival's incoming artistic director

### Former AD of Australia's Melbourne Festival chooses Toronto for next phase of admirable 30-year arts leadership career

**Toronto, ON** – CEO Anthony Sargent and co-founder and chair Tony Gagliano today announced widely respected Australian arts leader **Josephine Ridge** as [Luminato Festival](#)'s incoming artistic director. The outgoing artistic director of the [Melbourne Festival](#), Ridge boasts 30-years of experience and achievement in management and artistic roles for theatre, opera, classical music, ballet, producing and presenting venues and more.

*"I couldn't be more excited to introduce Canada to the incomparable Josephine Ridge, following Jorn Weisbrodt's widely admired five years,"* said Sargent. *"Josephine's global reputation as an artistic curator and cultural leader is widely recognized and enormously impressive. I'm thrilled that Josephine shares our enthusiasm and ambition for the future of Luminato at the dawn of its second decade, and for the city of Toronto. I'm also very proud that Josephine is the latest in a series of highly-respected, internationally-acclaimed cultural leaders to choose Canada's largest and most ambitious city in which to live, work and create."*

Following a comprehensive Canadian and international search led by **Searchlight Recruitment**, Sargent, Gagliano and a search committee found Ridge to be the best person to shape Luminato's artistic future as the Festival evolves into its second decade.

*"Our search committee was fortunate to meet with a remarkable group of short-listed candidates from Canada and around the world,"* said Gagliano. *"This interest and their qualities speak volumes to what Luminato has been able to achieve in our first decade, not least the international impact which the visionary programming and artistic contributions of our current Artistic Director Jorn Weisbrodt, and before him, Chris Lorway, have made. We look forward to building our second decade with Josephine, and to welcoming her to Toronto and the Luminato family."*

After three editions as Artistic Director of Melbourne Festival, one of Australia's largest and most-respected multi-art form international festivals, Ridge concluded her time with the organization in 2015 with the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition. Her curatorial response to Melbourne showcased programs designed to celebrate the city and engage the Festival with its vibrant and complex cultural landscape. Critically-acclaimed highlights have included Sylvie Guillem's *6,000 miles away/PUSH*, Jeff Mills and the Melbourne Symphony (*Light from the Outside World*), Headlong Theatre Company (George Orwell's *1984*), Nature Theater of Oklahoma (*Life and Times Parts 1-4*) and many commissions and co-commissions, including *The Shadow King*, (Malthouse Theatre), a retelling of *King Lear* through the Australian Indigenous experience. Responding to a three-year mandate focused on developing a more connected, broader and partnership oriented festival, Ridge's artistic leadership provided the context

for the Festival to increase audience engagement, box office revenue, sponsorship and private support. She leaves Melbourne Festival in its strongest position for many years.

Ridge was previously General Manager and then Executive Director of Sydney Festival for almost a decade (2003 to 2012), and has also been Deputy General Manager of both The Australian Ballet (1997 to 2002) and the Australian Chamber Orchestra (1993 to 1997).

*“I believe so deeply in the fundamental importance of festivals such as Luminato. It is a great honour to accept the role of incoming Artistic Director,”* said Ridge. *“I have much respect and admiration for what the Festival has achieved and created in its first ten years and for the vision and accomplishments of my two distinguished predecessors. I am confident that together with Anthony and the team, we can ensure Luminato’s future as one of the most acclaimed city-based arts festivals in the world – and most importantly, one that is deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of Toronto.”*

Ridge will assume the position of Artistic Director early this summer, subject to the successful completion of immigration processing. She will attend the 2016 Luminato Festival and plans to follow Anthony Sargent in purchasing a home in downtown Toronto.

Outgoing Artistic Director Jorn Weisbrodt programs his fifth and final Luminato Festival from June 10 to 26, marking the organization’s 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary and first-ever artistic residency: at Toronto’s iconic decommissioned power plant, the Hearn Generating Station. Tickets for the 2016 Luminato Festival are now on sale and can be purchased 24/7 at [luminatofestival.com](http://luminatofestival.com).

#### **Links:**

- [Josephine Ridge, biography](#)
- [Josephine Ridge, images](#)
- [January Programming announcement: \*The James Plays, Situation Rooms and Unsound Toronto\*](#)
- [March Programming announcement: \*Rufus Does Judy and monumental\*](#)
- [The Hearn Generating Station – Facts and Figures](#)
- To subscribe to receive future Luminato Festival media alerts, press releases and invitations, please email Ashley Ballantyne at [aballantyne@luminato.com](mailto:aballantyne@luminato.com).

#### **Media Relations:**

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#### **Social Media:**

Twitter: [@Luminato](https://twitter.com/Luminato); #Luminato10 #TurnOnTheHearn;

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/LuminatoFestival](http://www.facebook.com/LuminatoFestival)

Instagram: [@LuminatoFestival](https://www.instagram.com/LuminatoFestival)

#### **About Luminato Festival:**

Luminato Festival is Toronto’s global multi-arts festival dedicated to performance, visual art, music, theatre, dance, magic and more. In 2016, the Festival marks its 10th anniversary from June 10 to 26 with

a free and ticketed program of local and international artists delivering adventurous art in adventurous places.

In its first decade, Luminato has become one of the preeminent arts festivals in North America, having commissioned close to 100 new works of art, with more than 3,000 performances featuring 11,000 artists from over 40 countries. This June, as part of its first-ever residency, Luminato will temporarily transform the Hearn Generating Station, an epic decommissioned power plant and one of Canada's majestic industrial landmarks, into the world's largest multi-arts centre under one roof with a theatre, a music stage, a site-specific performance space, restaurants, bars and more. [#TurnOnTheHearn](#)

Curated by Artistic Director Jorn Weisbrodt and led by CEO Anthony Sargent, Luminato Festival is a charitable, not-for-profit, cultural organization.

Luminato Festival gratefully acknowledges the generous support and the vision of its Founding Luminaries, SuperNova donors, Patron Circle Members and Foundations. Luminato Festival proudly acknowledges the support of Founding Government Partner the Province of Ontario, the Government of Canada, City of Toronto, Ontario Arts Council, CIBC and L'Oréal Canada.

[www.luminatofestival.com](http://www.luminatofestival.com)