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BC Entertainment Hall of Fame Announces “SKYLARK” & “DAVID FOSTER” StarWalk Ceremony Inductions Friday September 22, 2023

Canadian Group “Skylark” with Founding Vocalist BJ Cook and Composer / Writer David Foster to receive stars on the Granville Street StarWalk in Downtown Vancouver, BC. Public welcome to attend the induction ceremony.

Vancouver, BC (September 11, 2023) The BC Entertainment Hall of Fame (BCEHOF) announces two new StarWalk inductees from the world of music: the BC group “Skylark” represented by Founder BJ Cook; and composer/writer David Foster. They will join the 300+ previous inductees who have been recognized for their significant contribution to the province’s entertainment industry and cultural landscape.

Each will be celebrated with a star presentation in front of the iconic Commodore Ballroom at 10:30 am on Friday September 22, 2023. The public, fans and media are invited to attend each of the presentations which will take place along the 800 block of Granville Street outside the Commodore Ballroom.

Induction Ceremonies:

- **September 22, 2023, at 10:30 am – Skylark represented by Founder BJ Cook and composer/writer David Foster at (800 block Granville Street outside the iconic Commodore Ballroom)**

"These inductees are especially poignant because they represent the heart of the BC entertainment sector given the 50th anniversary of the massive hit *Wildflower* by Skylark and the countless hits David “the hitman” Foster has had on the global music, film and entertainment industries,” says Bill Allman, BCEHOF President. David Foster and BJ Cook of “Skylark” will be present at this historic induction ceremony.

Vancouver Mayor Ken Sim will also be attending with formal greetings from the City of Vancouver to our BCEHOF Star Walk inductees.

About the Inductees

Skylark

2023 marks the 50th anniversary of Skylark's *Wildflower*, the classic Canadian love ballad that endures genres and generations like sidewalk chamomile with over 100 covers and sample versions to become one of the most beloved and performed songs in the history of Canadian pop music.

"Let her cry for she's a lady, let her dream for she's a child..."

Listen and watch "Skylark" on YouTube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9MJ8fVWL1>

This tender refrain is recognized around the world, and though written and most often sung by men, the song owes its enduring success in large part to three women: BJ Cook was the force that envisioned and formed the band Skylark and midwived its record deal; CKLW Program Director Rosalie Tremblay picked *Wildflower* as a hit and ensured its release as a single; and music publisher Valley Hennell has protected the copyright for half a century.

Listen on Spotify here: <https://open.spotify.com/artist/3j9kYXgECWglelCSWRVulK>

BJ Cook and David Foster are two surviving members of the original Skylark band: guitarist/composer Doug Edwards, vocalist Donny Gerrard, bassist Steve Pugsley, drummer Duris Maxwell, B3 player Robbie King, bg vocalist Bobby Taylor and lyricist Dave Richardson have all passed. While Foster went on the worldwide acclaim, it was BJ who assembled the Skylark players and secured the Capitol Records deal that launched both the song and Foster's career. To this day Foster includes *Wildflower* in his Hitman concerts and tips his hat to BJ as the root of his success. (Musicians Brian Hilton, Norm McPherson, John Verner and Allan Mix later toured with Skylark during its brief performing sojourn.)

When she met David, BJ Cook was already a pioneer in the nascent BC music scene. In the '60s she honed her craft as a showgirl and singer in clubs and bars in Vancouver, opening for stars like Johnny Cash, Della Reese, Marty Robbins and Nancy Wilson, touring with Spanky and Our Gang and The Delights, and fronting her own band Sweet Beaver before joining Ronnie Hawkins and The Hawks in Toronto. There she joined forces with a much younger David Foster, and in 1971 when Ronnie fired Foster for "looking like a cadaver on stage", they moved back to

Vancouver and founded Skylark. It was BJ's connections that led to the recording deal with Capitol Records and a move to LA. When after two albums, the birth of daughter Amy Skylark Foster and a divorce, they went their separate ways, BJ stayed in the biz, working as a PA for Jaye P Morgan and co-writing with Michael McDonald, Brenda Russell, and Bill Champlin. With her longtime collaborator Domenic Troiano she wrote the theme for Night Heat, Air Waves and Hot Shots. At age 81 she is still rockin' residing in Victoria, BC.

How did a poem written by a young policeman (Dave Richardson) for his nurse girlfriend in Victoria Canada, set to music by a musician he had never met (guitarist Doug Edwards) and recorded in a classic first take by an unknown Canadian band (Skylark) launch the career of one of the world's best-known producers (David Foster) and become beloved around the globe? *Wildflower* is a one hit wonder whose success is an unlikely tale of luck, pluck, timing and tenacity. The song almost didn't get written, recorded or released. The title does not appear in the song's lyric. It defied all odds and broke every rule to become a pop and soul standard.

After the first two singles fizzled, Capitol Records released *Wildflower* in February 1973 as the third Skylark single at the insistence of hit maker Rosalie Trombley at CKLW Windsor. It went to #1 on the Canadian adult contemporary charts and in May 1973 peaked at #9 on the Billboard Hot 100 and #10 on RPM singles chart.

That same year 1973 saxophonist Hank Crawford (Ray Charles' musical director) released an instrumental version (on an album entitled *Wildflower*) which decades later was sampled by 2pac Shakur (Shorty Wanna Be A Thug), Kanye West (Drive Slow), Drake (Miss Me) and recently by young UK rapper Central Cee (Retail Therapy). In 2005 Jamie Foxx sampled the New Birth version in his mega hit Unpredictable.

By the time Skylark released its second album in 1974 (which also included *Wildflower*) the song had been covered by Johnny Mathis, the New Birth, Jimmy Smith and the O'Jays. It went on to be covered by countless artists including Colour Me Badd, The Neville Brothers, Lisa Fischer, Gary Morris and Blake Sheldon to become one of the most performed songs in Canadian pop music, with over one hundred covers and compilations and dozens of sample versions. It was the only English song on Canto-pop superstar Sandy Lam's 1991 classic Cantonese album entitled *Wildflower*.

Wildflower continues to be sung at weddings, graduations and funerals and at the Olympics, and was featured in Gangstresses, a film about prostitution, as the soundtrack for a video counselling US veteran with PTSD; and on New York Undercover (now rebooted) whose writers didn't know it was written by a cop. Sung in English by Journey lead singer Arnel Pineda, it's the theme song for a 200-episode Tagalog Filipino revenge drama entitled *Wildflower* now on Netflix. This year it was sampled by Muslim hip hop artist Siya in her song Together.

Wildflower has been honoured with SOCAN Classic and Crystal Awards and a BMI Millionaire's Award. In 2011 it was inducted into Canadian Song Writers Hall of Fame.

David Foster in Los Angeles and BJ Cook in Victoria are the sole remaining surviving original members of Skylark—Doug Edwards, Steve Pugsley, Duris Maxwell, Robbie King, lyricist Dave Richardson and vocalist Donny Gerrard have all passed on but the music will live on forever. More detailed history and list of covers and sample versions at www.wildflowersong.com.

David Foster

David Walter Foster, [OC](#), [OBC](#), record producer, composer, arranger, pianist (born 1 November 1949 in Victoria, BC). David Foster is one of the most commercially successful and influential pop music producers of all time. He has been called “the real king of pop,” the “master of bombastic pop kitsch” and “the Hit Man.” He is perhaps best known for his collaborations with Chicago, Barbra Streisand, Natalie Cole, Céline Dion, Whitney Houston, Josh Groban and Michael Bublé, and for the successful charity single “[Tears Are Not Enough](#).” He has produced such international No. 1 hits as “I Swear,” “The Glory of Love,” “The Power of Love,” “Un-break My Heart” and “I Will Always Love You.” Foster is a member of the [Canadian Music Hall of Fame](#), the Canadian Music Industry Hall of Fame and the US Songwriters Hall of Fame. An Officer of the Order of Canada and a Member of the Order of British Columbia, he has won five Juno Awards and 16 Grammy Awards.

Foster's multifaceted career has made him one of the most influential international figures in popular music.

David Foster grew up in Victoria BC, with six sisters. Foster lived in Edmonton in 1969 and was mentored by [Tommy Banks](#). He then lived briefly in Toronto, where he played for Ronnie Hawkins before returning to Vancouver to form the band Skylark with vocalist B.J. Cook and guitarist Doug Edwards. The band's *Wildflower* was a Top 10 hit in Canada and the United States in 1972. In 1971, Foster went to Los-Angeles with Skylark and remained there following the group's demise in 1973. He worked initially as a studio musician (for Michael Jackson, George Harrison, Rod Stewart and Barbra Streisand, among others) and an audition pianist. He was also the pianist for the stage version of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* at Los Angeles' Roxy Theatre and played with the band Airplay.

In 1979, Foster undertook a career as a record producer. He quickly became known for taking a hands-on role in the studio, often co-writing or arranging material. The first of Foster's dozens of hit records as a producer and/or songwriter was the Earth, Wind & Fire smash hit “After the Love Is Gone” (1979). Some of the No. 1 hits he produced include “I Swear,” “Un-break My Heart,” “The Power of Love” and “Glory of Love” (co-written with Peter Cetera), Natalie Cole's

“Unforgettable,” Whitney Houston’s “I Will Always Love You” and Céline Dion’s “Because You Loved Me.”

In 1985, while living briefly again in Vancouver, he co-wrote and produced the hugely successful charity single “[Tears Are Not Enough](#).” Other great successes for Foster as producer and/or writer during the 1980s and 1990s included Chicago’s “Hard to Say I’m Sorry,” “Hard Habit to Break,” and “You’re the Inspiration,” John Parr’s “St Elmo’s Fire (Man in Motion)” and Olivia Newton-John’s “Twist of Fate,” all Top 5 hits on *Billboard* charts. These songs established Foster’s trademark, heavily produced middle-of-the-road (MOR) sound, which was tailor-made for mainstream pop radio.

The who’s who of stars for whom Foster has produced albums or songs, or has written songs or arrangements, includes Bryan Adams, Paul Anka, Andrea Bocelli, Michael Bolton, Toni Braxton, Mariah Carey, Cher, Chicago, Alice Cooper, Neil Diamond, Lara Fabian, Kenny G, Hall & Oates, Michael Jackson, Katherine Jenkins, Diana Krall, Gordon Lightfoot, Madonna, Paul McCartney, Anne Murray, Payola\$, Lionel Richie, Rod Stewart and Barbra Streisand. Foster also helped introduce Québécoise superstar Céline Dion to English-language audiences by co-producing *Unison* (1990), her first album in English.

Between 1979 and 2010, Foster received 16 Grammy Awards from 46 nominations, including six in 1985 alone. His chain of Grammy wins began with the award for Best R&B Song (1979, “After the Love Has Gone”), Best Cast Show Album (1982, *Dreamgirls*), Producer of the Year (1984, *Chicago 17*), and Best Instrumental Arrangement Accompanying a Vocal (1984, “Hard Habit to Break” and 1986, “Somewhere,” as recorded by Streisand).

Foster also won Juno Awards as Producer of the Year in 1985 for *Chicago 17* and in 1986 for the soundtrack of *St Elmo’s Fire*. In total, he has received more than 20 Juno nominations. He shared the 1986 Canadian Country Music Association Songwriter(s) of the Year award with Charles Goodrum and Jim Vallance for the Anne Murray hit “Now and Forever.”

Foster’s domination of pop music sales continued beyond the 1990s, with several additional Grammys for record and album of the year and as producer and arranger: in 1991 for *Unforgettable*, sung by Natalie Cole; in 1993 for the soundtrack for *The Bodyguard*; in 1993 and 1996 for recordings by Dion and Cole. Further Grammys came in 2007 and 2010 for Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album (both recorded by Michael Bublé). Foster has also contributed songwriting for the Broadway musicals *Hot Feet* (2006) and *The Boy from Oz* (2003–04). In 2006, he appeared on *American Idol* as a mentor.

David Foster is founder of the David Foster Foundation. The David Foster Foundation provides financial support to Canadian families with children in need of life-saving organ transplants. In

addition to helping families with their non-medical expenses, the Foundation strives to increase public awareness and education about the importance of becoming a registered organ donor in Canada and the United States.

The David Foster Foundation is a non-profit charitable organization that for the past 37 years has assisted over 1,400 families with children in need of major organ transplants and provided much-needed dollars in direct family support. In 2006, the Foundation became a national organization, expanding to help families across Canada. The Foundation works in collaboration with transplant teams across Canada to provide support for children up to and including their 18th birthday year once they are listed for pediatric transplant to post-operative checkup.

Awards

Juno Awards

- Producer of the Year (*Chicago 17*) (1985)
- Producer of the Year (*St Elmo's Fire Soundtrack*) (1986)
- Instrumental Artist of the Year (1986)
- Instrumental Artist of the Year (1987)
- Instrumental Artist of the Year (1989)
- Inductee, Canadian Music Hall of Fame (1998)
- Humanitarian Award (2019)

Grammy Awards

- Best Rhythm & Blues Song ("After the Love Has Gone," Earth, Wind & Fire) (1979)
- Best Cast Show Album (*Dreamgirls: Original Broadway Cast Album*) (1982)
- Best Instrumental Arrangement Accompanying Vocal(s) ("Hard Habit to Break," Chicago) (1984)
- Producer of the Year, Non-Classical (1984)
- Best Instrumental Arrangement Accompanying Vocal(s) ("Somewhere," Barbra Streisand) (1986)
- Record of the Year ("Unforgettable," Natalie Cole and Nat King Cole) (1991)
- Album of the Year (*Unforgettable: With Love*, Natalie Cole) (1991)
- Producer of the Year, Non-Classical (1991)
- Record of the Year ("I Will Always Love You," Whitney Houston) (1993)
- Album of the Year (*The Bodyguard: Original Soundtrack Album*, various artists) (1993)
- Best Instrumental Arrangement Accompanying Vocal(s) ("When I Fall in Love," Céline Dion and Clive Griffin) (1993)
- Producer of the Year, Non-Classical (1993)
- Album of the Year (*Falling into You*, Céline Dion) (1996)
- Best Instrumental Arrangement with Accompanying Vocal(s) ("When I Fall in Love," Natalie Cole and Nat King Cole) (1996)

- Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album (*Call Me Irresponsible*, Michael Bublé) (2007)
- Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album (*Crazy Love*, Michael Bublé) (2010)

BMI Film and TV Awards

- Most Performed Song from a Film (“Glory of Love,” *The Karate Kid Part II*) (1987)
- Film Music Award (*The Secret of My Success*) (1988)
- Most Performed Song from a Film (“I Have Nothing,” *The Bodyguard*) (1994)
- Special Recognition (“The Olympic Tribute Award”) (1997)
- Special Recognition (2002 Winter Olympics) (2002)
- Outstanding Original Music and Lyrics (“Aren't They All Our Children,” *The Concert for World Children’s Day*), Primetime Emmy Awards (2003)
- Inductee, Canadian Music Industry Hall of Fame (2007)
- Inductee, US Songwriters Hall of Fame (2010)
- Diamond Jubilee Medal, Governor General of Canada (2012)
- Star, Hollywood Walk of Fame (2013)

About the BC Entertainment Hall of Fame

The BC Entertainment Hall of Fame was established in 1992 to honour high profile artists who have made a significant contribution to the entertainment industry in British Columbia.

The Hall’s current membership honours over 300 remarkable talents in two categories: StarWalk recognizing high profile artists in the entertainment industry; and Standing Ovation reserved for those receiving special merit for their outstanding contribution to the performing arts in British Columbia. The BCEHOF is a not-for profit society that is dedicated to honouring and preserving the memory of outstanding British Columbians from the Arts and Entertainment sector.

The BC Entertainment Hall of Fame’s StarWalk and The Orpheum Theatre are located within the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səl̓ílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations who have cared for and stewarded this land since time immemorial.

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David Foster & BJ Cook are available for in person and or phone interviews.

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