

Falls Arts Wall of Fame welcomes four new members

by [John Law](#)

Barely four years ago, Isabelle Rezazadeh was a Niagara Falls teen holed up in her bedroom making music on her computer. Her heroes were EDM icons Skrillex and – from her own city – Niagara Falls-born Joel Zimmerman, aka Deadmau5.

Eventually, it was Zimmerman who discovered her and released her first few EPs. And now, just like Deadmau5, she plays in front of sold out crowds around the world as REZZ. Also just like Deadmau5, she's now on the Niagara Falls Arts and Culture Wall of Fame. She joined three others during an induction ceremony Saturday at the Victoria Avenue library, which she couldn't attend – she was playing another huge show in Edmonton.

But mom Vita wanted everyone to know she was "honoured" to join the wall. "She absolutely loves what she's doing," she says. "For two years in our basement, she was preparing herself. She's self-educated."

"She was spending countless nights ... up to four or five in the morning, obsessed with creating (music)," adds sister Julie. At 23, Rezazadeh is among the youngest artists to get inducted on the city's Arts & Culture Wall of Fame. Earlier this year, she won the Juno Award for Electronic Album of the Year.

She joined three other inductees Saturday who have made their mark locally and internationally. Animator Alan Barillaro was inducted for his 20 years with Pixar, including an Oscar for his 2017 short film "Piper," which was screened during the ceremony.

Veteran theatre performer Jim Cooper formed the Oh Canada Eh? dinner theatre in Niagara Falls 25 years, which has now surpassed 4,000 performances (2,000 of them with Cooper). It has succeeded solely on ticket sales, he explained – no government funding.

"I'm overwhelmed," he said after his induction. "It's not just a good day for me, it's a bloody marvelous one."

Artist, producer and photographer Antoine Gaber stressed the need for artists to offer a sanctuary "to a world that needs it."

"As an artist I always ask myself a very simple question – how do I want to be remembered? What will be my legacy?"

In praising the four new names on the wall, Niagara Falls MP Rob Nicholson said "this world is a better place because of you."

It was echoed by Niagara Falls MP Wayne Gates, who said artists help reflect a community.

"A spot on the wall is only a small token of our appreciation, but it's our way of saying we're indebted to you," he said. "We cannot talk about arts and culture enough."

"You can't say you're a world class destination – a world class city – without having vibrant arts and culture."