

■ PHILANTHROPY

## Baders excel at the art of giving

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Isabel Bader grew up in northern Ontario playing the piano and acting in school plays.

As a teacher at the Thalia School of Speech and Drama in London, one of her students was nine-year-old Julie Christie, who went on to earn four Academy Award nominations for best actress, winning in 1965.

"I've always had a keen interest (in the arts)," said Isabel.

Alfred Bader, however, "is tone deaf."

"I have a terrible voice," her husband said, "but I love violin music, classical music."

The couple with a common love for the arts was in Kingston yesterday for a ceremonial ground-breaking for the Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts at 390 King St. West.

The Baders — Alfred is a Queen's University graduate with three degrees — have contributed \$18 million to the construction of the centre, estimated to cost \$63 million.

"Queen's needs it," said Alfred, 85, who made his fortune in the chemical industry. "They don't have anything like that. The land is beautiful, the location is beautiful."

"We just didn't realize it would be so expensive."

As a result, the Baders, who live in Milwaukee, Wis., have pledged another \$4 million to the project if Queen's successfully raises the remainder by Dec. 31, 2010.

The federal and provincial governments will contribute a maximum of \$15 million apiece, while Kingston is chipping in \$6 million. Queen's will raise the rest.

Isabel Bader grew up in Kirkland Lake and attended the University of Toronto — "I forgive her," said Alfred — but has plenty of Queen's connections.

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