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ALBERTA THEATRE PROJECTS

JUST ANNOUNCED: ALBERTA THEATRE PROJECTS' 2019/20 SEASON OF WORLD-CLASS CONTEMPORARY
THEATRE IN CALGARY

The new season includes a world premiere, two hot-button dramas, a classic children's fantasy, a rock concert/music-theatre mash-up, and a party you won't want to miss.

CALGARY, ALBERTA – Today Alberta Theatre Projects announced their 48th season line-up that will run from September 2019 to May 2020. With a return to a six-play season and longer show runs, the season is the first programmed by ATP's Executive and Artistic Director Darcy Evans. "We have assembled a season of plays that examine the act of intersection. The plays, each in their own way, explore exciting onstage collisions of diverging ideas, points of view, class, gender or cultural perspectives. The fallout from these visceral human encounters is by turns explosive, surprising, funny and illuminating."

The 2019/20 season was announced by Evans live from the Martha Cohen Theatre stage. Subscriptions will be on sale starting March 5, 2019.

The six plays ATP will be presenting in its 2019/20 season are:

- **The Wedding Party** Sept. 11 – 29, 2019
By Kristen Thomson
Directed by Darcy Evans
- **Disgraced** Oct. 16 – Nov. 3, 2019
By Ayad Akhtar
Directed by Nigel Shawn Williams
- **The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe** Nov. 19 – Dec. 29, 2019
Story by C.S. Lewis
Adapted by Joseph Robinette
Directed by Darcy Evans
- **Old Stock: A Refugee Love Story** Feb. 5 – 16, 2020
A 2b theatre company production
Created by Hannah Moscovitch,
Christian Barry & Ben Caplan

- **Actually** Feb. 26 – Mar. 15, 2020
By Anna Ziegler
Directed by Jenna Rodgers
- **Cowgirl Up** Apr. 15 – May 3, 2020
By Anna Chatterton
Directed by Christine Brubaker

To kick off the season, the Martha Cohen Theatre will be transformed into cabaret seating for the first time in 22 years to present the latest work from acclaimed Canadian playwright Kristen Thomson: a hilarious, spirited immersive theatre experience. *The Wedding Party* celebrates the wedding of Sherry and Jack Jr., and the joining together of two very unlikely families: The well-to-do Sealey-Skeetes and the hard-working, hard-living Boychuks. Audiences will have a ring-side seat for their big day, as an outrageous reception spins out of control in real time. Family secrets, squabbling in-laws, embarrassing speeches, terrible dance moves and those cousins you wish hadn't shown up. In one of the play's most impressive comic devices, six of Calgary's finest actors will portray the dozens of wedding guests in attendance, moving from one outrageous character to the next at a dizzying pace. "A comedic clash of classes" (*The Globe and Mail*), the play enjoyed a wildly successful world premiere at Toronto's Crow's Theatre in 2017. *The Wedding Party* will be directed by Darcy Evans and will run from September 11 to 29.

Next up, the Martha Cohen Theatre turns to a dinner party with the winner of the 2013 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, *Disgraced* by Ayad Akhtar. One of today's most talked about plays, the plot follows Amir Kapoor, a successful lawyer living a life of privilege on the Upper East-side of Manhattan, who has turned away from his Muslim faith in post 9/11 America. When he and his wife host a dinner party for Amir's rising African-American colleague and her Jewish husband, the pleasant evening gives way to a searing debate about race, privilege, politics and identity, fearlessly taken on from a variety of cultural perspectives. Marriage, friendships, ambition, religion, race, art and power: nothing is off-limits in this riveting drama. Tense, surprising and shockingly funny, *Disgraced* will hold audiences on the edge of their seats.

Set in the Martha Cohen Theatre in thrust configuration, the production will be helmed by the highly acclaimed director Nigel Shawn Williams whom audiences will recognize from ATP's 2018 production of *The Virgin Trial*. "I'm very happy to be directing at ATP again, especially during Darcy's inaugural season. *Disgraced* is such an intelligent, funny and horrifying play all at the same time," says Williams. "I'm looking forward to tackling these issues of race, appropriation, and what the American Dream can do to one's psyche, as well as having that conversation with ATP's audience!" *Disgraced* runs from October 16 to November 3.

For their annual holiday show, audiences will be taken on a journey to the mysterious, snowbound Land of Narnia, in a dazzling stage adaptation of C.S. Lewis' classic children's

fantasy novel *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Adapted by Joseph Robinette (*Charlotte's Web*) and directed by Evans in thrust configuration, the thrilling, beloved tale takes four children from a dusty English mansion to a mythical, far-away world gripped in an epic battle between the forces of good and evil. Helped along by the fawn, Mr. Tumnus, the friendly Beaver family and a forest of talking animals, Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy take centre stage in the struggle to free Narnia from the icy grip of the White Witch as they await the triumphant return of Aslan the Lion. The magical, wintery landscape of Narnia will be brought to life onstage in the Martha Cohen Theatre's thrust configuration through the use of extraordinary scenic elements, costumes and puppetry, as audiences watch the children learn profound lessons of courage, loyalty and wisdom. "Ceaselessly inventive and joyously imaginative" (*National Post*), *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is sure to be an exciting and deeply heartwarming theatrical experience for children and adults alike. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* runs from November 19 to December 29.

2020 will see the Martha Cohen Theatre's return to proscenium configuration for the presentation of *Old Stock: A Refugee Love Story*, a 2b theatre company production created by Hannah Moscovitch, Ben Caplan and Christian Barry. Humourously dark story-theatre with a high-energy concert, *Old Stock* debuted in Halifax and has become an international sensation, also enjoying a wildly popular seven-week run Off-Broadway. The play tells the true story of Hannah Moscovitch's great-grandparents, who landed on Pier 2 as Jewish Romanian immigrants to start a new life. Dark and hilarious, *Old Stock* is a genre-bending folk tale, woven together in a concert of brash, rollicking, joyful Klezmer Folk music. "A thing of raw and unmissable beauty" (*Herald Scotland*), this Klezmer-folk music-theatre hybrid stars musical sensation Ben Caplan. *Old Stock: A Refugee Love Story* runs from February 5 to 16, 2020.

Next, ATP's audience will have the opportunity to witness a provocative, emotionally charged new work by American playwright Anna Ziegler. The winner of the Ovation Award in Los Angeles for best new play, *Actually* takes place on the contemporary campus of Princeton University and tells the story of two very different Freshmen. Amber comes from a wealthy Jewish family. Tom is a young African American man raised in poverty, the first in his family to attend university. One evening, the two meet at a frat party and hit it off, sharing laughs and a few too many drinks. Precisely what happens next is the devastating, complex question at the heart of this riveting new drama. Tom and Amber both plead their case in a direct address to the audience, each defending their own very different versions of events. Examining the issue of consent head-on, *Actually* tackles the politics of race, gender and privilege on a contemporary university campus.

It is an honour to announce the ATP directorial debut of one of the most important new voices in Calgary theatre and Artistic Director of Chromatic Theatre, Jenna Rodgers. "*Actually* is a profound investigation of the complicated web of systemic injustice that informs our legal systems," says Rodgers. "Ziegler skillfully teases out the loveable and reprehensible qualities of the two parties in question, providing an incredible platform for audiences to question and confront their own bias. I hope the play will be a provocative

continuation of the ongoing and urgent conversation surrounding consent.” *Actually* runs from February 26 to March 15, 2020.

ATP will close its 2019/20 season with the world premiere of *Cowgirl Up* by Anna Chatterton. Commissioned and developed by ATP, *Cowgirl Up* is a mythical parable, a story of the power of women and a heartfelt love letter to Rodeo Life. Joyce, Effie and BB are cowgirl goddesses on Mount Olympus who lament what they see down on earth. It’s a cowboy’s world. Cocky steer-ropers have stolen the spotlight for long enough. The goddesses decide to use their considerable supernatural powers to give rise to a Cowgirl Revolution. When they discover Cassidy Clark, a talented, charismatic loner from Okotoks, Alberta, they know they have found the barrel racer poised to lead their cause. The three goddesses appear to her one day, offering her all the gifts she will need to earn her first buckle at the Canadian Finals Rodeo championship. Atop her trusty mare, Starbright, the play follows Cassidy’s swift rise to the top of the circuit, throwing back shots of Jack Daniels and two-stepping along the way. Cassidy wrestles with her new-found fame, and just how far she will push herself and Starbright in pursuit of their dream. Chatterton’s *Within the Glass* and *Gertrude and Alice* (written with Evalyn Parry and Karin Randoja) were both shortlisted for the Governor General’s Award for Drama in 2017 and 2018 respectively. Her newest play *Cowgirl Up* is a magical, irreverent new work that approaches rodeo culture from a whole new perspective, examining the unique challenges faced by women. *Cowgirl Up* will be directed by nationally renowned theatre artist and member of the directing faculty of the University of Calgary, Christine Brubaker, and will feature elements of modern dance and movement as Starbright the horse comes vividly to life onstage. *Cowgirl Up* runs from April 15 to May 3, 2020.

Alberta Theatre Projects’ current season will finish off with *Playwrights Projects*, two weeks of new concurrent workshops, from April 29 to May 12, 2019, featuring the work of our Playwrights Unit members, Cheryl Foggo, Marshall Vielle, Vern Thiessen, Anna Chatterton and Louise Casemore. The Playwrights Unit is facilitated by newly-appointed Artistic Associate Meg Braem, herself a Governor-General’s Award shortlisted playwright. Included among the workshops will be Calgary playwright Casemore’s *Undressed*, Alberta Theatre Projects’ first work commissioned under the tenure of new Executive and Artistic Director Darcy Evans. *Playwrights Projects* will culminate in an exciting weekend of public readings from May 10 to May 12, 2019.

Since the beginning of his tenure in June 2018, Evans has worked with ATP’s staff and Board of Directors to formulate a renewed mission and vision for the organization, engaging members of the arts community, stakeholders and donors in over 200 one-on-one meetings. “We are beyond thrilled by Darcy’s vision for the future of Alberta Theatre Projects,” says ATP President Vishal Saini. “The board has really enjoyed being involved in this process, and it has been rewarding to watch his vision become a reality with the 2019/20 Season.”

All plays in the 2019/20 season will be presented at the Martha Cohen Theatre at Arts Commons (215 8 Ave. SE).

Season Subscriptions are on sale March 5, 2019, starting at just \$140. For more information about the plays in the 2019/20 season or becoming an Alberta Theatre Projects subscriber, please visit www.albertatheatreprojects.com.

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