

# ALBERTA THEATRE PROJECTS

For Immediate Release:

## **The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe becomes highest selling show in the company's history**

### **Board of Directors extends Executive & Artistic Director Darcy Evans contract to 2023**

**CALGARY, Dec. 11, 2019** – It's official: Calgarians have fallen in love with Narnia, and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* has become the highest selling show in Alberta Theatre Projects history. Single ticket sales have blown past the previous highest selling show, 2014-15's *Charlotte's Web* by nearly 125%.

Playing to sold out audiences, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, based on the classic fantasy novel by C.S. Lewis, has captured the imaginations of Calgarians young and old this holiday season. We've had to add additional performances just to keep up with demand, and the show will continue its run until December 29.

This isn't the only success story of the 2019-20 season either.

- On Giving Tuesday (Dec. 3), Alberta Theatre Projects raised over \$25,000 in 24 hours, thanks in-part to one generous, anonymous donor who matched the first \$10,000 in donations. This support will "help us fly" in a very special theatrical production, which will be revealed in our next season lineup.
- 2019-20 Subscription revenue is at a 10 year high with 595 new subscribers. The company has seen a 28% increase in total subscribers from the previous season.
- Total attendance has grown by 77% and paid attendance has increased by an incredible 87% over this time last year.
- Total ticket revenue year over year is up 90%
- The closing show of the 2018-19 season, *The New Canadian Curling Club*, became the highest selling non-holiday show in the company's history, paving the way to a successful 2019-20 season.

When Darcy Evans stepped into the newly combined roles of the Executive & Artistic Director in 2018, the economy was still recovering, and he was faced with budget projections that would end the 2018-19 season with a deficit of at least a \$300,000. Subscription revenue was already down 35% from the previous year and the core season had been reduced to five plays instead of the typical six.

Evans took a bold approach to reinvigorate the Alberta Theatre Projects' brand and renew Calgarian's love and trust in the company's mission. He made sweeping cuts to expenses, restructured administrative operations and added *The New Canadian Curling Club* to the programming slate. The theatre ended the 2018-19 season with a dramatically reduced deficit of \$49,000.

The 2019-20 season explored new directions in programming, including converting the theatre to cabaret seating for *The Wedding Party* and producing the provocative, award-winning drama *Disgraced*, which was critically lauded by local outlets.

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“These successes point to the fact that even in challenging times, Calgarians continue to remind us that the arts are an important part of life in this city. Their enthusiasm and support serve as an inspiration. I am committed to working everyday with my team and collaborators to create meaningful world-class theatre, and to maintain Alberta Theatre Projects as a vital part of the arts community here in Calgary,” Evans said.

In light of this dramatic turnaround for the company, the Alberta Theatre Projects Board of Directors has extended Executive & Artistic Director Darcy Evans contract an additional two years, through to 2023.

“Darcy has taken bold, thoughtful action since the day he stepped into his role as Executive & Artistic Director,” said Vishal Saini, Chair of the ATP Board of Directors. “His energy and vision have been instrumental in shaping an exciting future for Alberta Theatre Projects and have clearly captivated our audiences and stakeholders. We are thrilled that his tenure is now set to extend to the 2023 season. We look forward to more successes and exciting theatrical experiences in the days ahead.”

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## **About Alberta Theatre Projects:**

Alberta Theatre Projects is a Calgary-based, not-for-profit, professional theatre company that celebrates the art of live theatre. From its home in the Martha Cohen Theatre at Arts Commons, the company produces world-caliber shows with a focus on idea-driven new works, plays by Canadian playwrights, and contemporary theatre from around the world. It is also a national leader in new play development and dramaturgy.

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