

ALBERTA THEATRE PROJECTS

For Immediate Release:

Alberta Theatre Projects' new show, Undressed, explores the question: what do you do with a used wedding dress?

CALGARY, January 20, 2022 – Weddings can be joyous events, gathering with family and friends to celebrate the love of a couple deciding to commit their lives together. The reception can often lead to wild and unexpected experiences, making for some great stories afterwards. They typically take an enormous amount of time to plan, right down to the last detail. And one of the most important decisions is the dress the bride will wear. But have you ever wondered – what happens to the gown after the big day?

The general assumption is that the gown becomes a treasured memory for years to come, like the day itself. But wedding dresses are physical THINGS, often professionally cleaned, preserved and boxed up at significant cost, endlessly relocated from place to place throughout a person's lifetime. And each dress has its own story to tell.

In Louise Casemore's extravagant one-woman, scripted interactive cabaret, *Undressed*, the playwright and performer explores this question. Casemore embodies several characters throughout the show, some of which will cause audience members to laugh, and others perhaps shed a few tears. The first character, the host for the evening, quips that all are present to share in "something old, nothing new" as she leads audiences through a fictitious live eco-auction of used wedding dresses. Each dress comes with a story – aided by a letter written by the woman who wore it. These letters reflect the aspirations of each bride, and form a bridge between the woman who originally wore the dress and the potential bidders. As she reads, Casemore transforms into each of the brides whose dresses are up for auction, sharing their personal yet familiar story about their love, their wedding, and how they originally became paired with their dresses. Whatever their tale, *Undressed* is sure to provide audiences with a hilarious experience they can relate to, laugh at, and commiserate with.

What to do with a used wedding dress is an experience that Casemore is personally familiar with, and became her catalyst for writing *Undressed*. She last saw her wedding dress in 2009, when it was preserved and packed into a giant box. It survived several moves – and was once used as a coffee table due to lack of storage space. It even outlasted the marriage itself. A recent rehearsal was an eventful day: surrounded by the creative team, Casemore opened the box that contained her wedding dress for the first time. It was an emotional experience for all involved, which brought realizations about the connections a dress can hold, regardless of whether one has experienced wearing one.

"A wedding dress is so much more than a piece of clothing," said Casemore. "It's a status symbol, a memory keeper, and wishing well all rolled into one. It reflects a person's hopes and dreams, who they aspire to be, if only for just one day. It holds power over us and becomes a very personal decision if we choose to keep it, or how or when we choose to let it go."

Like many weddings, getting *Undressed* to the stage has involved much planning, taking on new meaning as time passed, and has faced its share of trials and tribulations. Initially planned for Alberta Theatre Projects' 2020-21 season, the production was delayed due to the pandemic. Today, Artistic and Executive Director Rohit Chokhani is thrilled to present the show with this season's offerings.

"Regardless of our identity and cultural background, I find that weddings are an important part of being part of a family and a community. It brings us together. Although this production has been through some stop-and-start iterations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it has always brought us together as a team. We are proud to finally present it to Calgarians hungry to engage with live arts as our first production in the new year - 2022," says Chokhani. "People want to share in the familiar and share a laugh at life. *Undressed* has become something extravagant and extremely rare, comprised of familiar stories, and an incredible set and staging made from nearly

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100 wedding dresses donated from our community. It shatters any preconceived notions about a one-person show and offers Albertans a much-needed escape during these uncertain times in our communities.”

***Undressed* runs from January 26 – February 13, 2022 in the Martha Cohen Theatre at Arts Commons (215 8 Ave. SE). Tickets are available at www.albertatheatreprojects.com or 403-294-7402.**

Audience Considerations: Recommended for ages 14+

Written and performed by: Louise Casemore

Creative Team:

Director: Jenna Rodgers

Resident Director: Kathryn Smith

Set Design: Lane Shordee

Costume Design: Bianca Guimarães de Manuel

Assistant Costume Design: Anne Kirsten

Lighting Design: Jonathan Kim

Sound Design: Greg Monforton

Stage Manager: Carissa Sams

Apprentice Stage Manager: Jennifer Yeung

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Alberta Theatre Projects is very excited to be able to bring this show to the stage, and provide a great experience for Calgary audiences. We would be happy to arrange an interview with one of our artists - they are looking forward to speaking with media about the show’s process, development, and the upcoming run.

Our focus is on safely moving forward with the production, taking a surplus of care to ensure the health of our patrons and everyone involved in our performances. As such, **Rohit Chokhani, Artistic and Executive Director**, kindly requests that any questions regarding Alberta Theatre Project’s COVID protocols, health and safety measures, or any organizational decisions be directed only to him, as he is best equipped to answer such queries.

About Alberta Theatre Projects:

We create world-class contemporary theatre in Calgary from our home in the Martha Cohen Theatre. We are a national leader in new play development. Programming is selected from the finest Canadian and international plays driven by the collision of diverging ideas, points of view, class, gender or cultural perspectives. Our productions radically explore our space, blurring the line between the audience and the artist through multiple seating configurations each season.

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