

ALBERTA THEATRE PROJECTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

***Cowgirl Up* hits the Martha Cohen Theatre stage to kick off Alberta Theatre Projects' bold and magical 2022-23 Season**

CALGARY, Oct 13, 2022 – Alberta Theatre Projects is thrilled to present the first production of its 2022-23 Season: the world premiere of *Cowgirl Up* written by Anna Chatterton and co-created with dramaturg Meg Braem and director Christine Brubaker.

Cowgirl Up was incubated and workshopped at ATP, and was originally programmed for the 2019-20 Season before being put on hold in the Spring of 2020 due to the pandemic.

“The world premiere of *Cowgirl Up* has been years in the making, and we’re delighted to open the season with a production that is so quintessentially Calgarian with the city’s rich rodeo history,” says ATP Artistic & Executive Director Rohit Chokhani. “We couldn’t be more thrilled and proud of the team that has brought it to life on stage.”

The play features three cowgirl goddesses lamenting that it’s a cowboy’s world, and that the heroines of rodeos past are all but forgotten. The goddesses decide to use their considerable supernatural powers to give rise to a cowgirl revolution. When they discover Cassidy Clark, they know they have found the barrel racer poised to lead their cause, and offer her all the advice and coaching she will need to earn her first buckle at a major rodeo competition. We follow Cassidy as she rises to the top of the circuit, wrestles with her newfound fame, and just how far she will push herself and her trusty mare Starbright in pursuit of their dream.

“*Cowgirl Up* is a love letter to all the resilient, hardworking cowgirls who do it for the love of it - remarkably similar to us artists,” says playwright Anna Chatterton. “It started with a postcard that was sent to me in black and white of a row of confident, happy cowgirls from the early 1900s. I was so struck by the joy on their faces, and the air of freedom they exuded, not typically seen in photos of women in those days. I loved the idea of the rhythm of horses and the lingo of rodeo. I also wanted to disrupt the iconic symbol of cowboys--putting cowgirls front and centre. And so, the idea of writing a play about cowgirls was born.”

“I steeped myself in years of deep research,” Chatterton adds. “Learning the nitty-gritty of barrel racing, the huge job of caring for a horse, and rodeo culture. Then came the delicate dance of balancing fact with artistic license to create a dramatic story.”

Audiences can not only look forward to a dramatic story, but also to seeing how Chatterton, director Christine Brubaker, choreographer Tania Alvarado and the multi-talented cast bring the horses of the play to life on stage, and how they bring the excitement of live barrel racing into the theatre.

Further fuelling this excitement, *Cowgirl Up* also marks the return of a fan-favourite stage configuration not seen at ATP since 2019. The Thrust Configuration sees the stage brought out into the audience with seating surrounding three sides of the performing space. This breaks the barrier between audience and the performers, and gets patrons right into the action.

“Audiences love that the adaptability of the space allows them to feel more and more immersed in the theatre that we do,” says ATP Producer Marcie Januska. “When we show the barrel races, the audience is going to feel like they’re sitting right in the infield at an actual barrel race.”

***Cowgirl Up* runs from October 18 - 30, 2022, in the Martha Cohen Theatre at Arts Commons (215 8 Ave SE). Tickets are available at albertatheatreprojects.com or 403-294-7402. Also, as part of the run,**

ALBERTA THEATRE PROJECTS

there will be an Audio Described Performance on October 26. For more information on accessible performances, visit albertatheatreprojects.com/accessible-performances.

Audience Considerations: Recommended for ages 12+

Written by Anna Chatterton

Co-created with Meg Braem and Christine Brubaker

Directed by Christine Brubaker

Cast:

Darcy Gerhart – Starbright, Muffin

Karen Johnson-Diamond - Effie

Richard Lee Hsi – Jed, Announcer, Rebel, Lou

Katelyn Morishita – Joyce

Rebekah Ogden – BB

Cara Rebecca - Cassidy

Creative Team:

Playwright: Anna Chatterton

Director: Christine Brubaker

Dramaturg: Meg Braem

Choreographer: Tania Alvarado

Assistant Director: Camryn Hathaway

Dance Captain: Richard Lee Hsi

Set & Lighting Design: Narda McCarroll

Costume Design: Cathleen Sbrizzi

Sound Design: Peter Moller

Stage Manager: Sara Turner

Assistant Stage Manager: Chandler Ontkean

-30-

For media inquiries, please contact:

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

SAVE THE DATE: Media Call, Wednesday, October 19, 12:30 – 1:30 pm. Actors will preview a short presentation on stage for photography and video opportunity. Select creative team members will be available for interviews after the presentation. An email invitation will follow closer to the date.

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

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productions radically explore our space, blurring the line between the audience and the artist through multiple seating configurations each season.

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