

ALBERTA THEATRE PROJECTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Expect the unexpected: Alberta Theatre Projects' *The Jungle Book* presents a fun and wild ride through the jungle this holiday season

CALGARY, Nov 28, 2022 – Alberta Theatre Projects (ATP) is thrilled to present [The Jungle Book](#) this holiday season. Adapted and directed by ATP Artistic & Executive Director Rohit Chokhani, *The Jungle Book* is based on the classic stories of Rudyard Kipling.

Audiences are invited to escape into the jungles of India with this vibrant reimagining of the legend of the boy raised by wild animals. Mowgli lives by the law of the jungle, where survival depends not only on strength and courage but on wisdom and reliance on the wolf pack for survival. When a confrontation with a dangerous tiger isolates Mowgli, he is forced to confront the truth: is he a man-cub or a human? Caught between two worlds, with the support of his friends, Mowgli must search for his sense of self in a quest to discover where he truly belongs.

Many audience members will be familiar with the classic tales of *The Jungle Book*, having seen either the Disney animated feature from the late 1960s, or one of the more recent film or television adaptations, employing full use of CGI and motion capture technology. But – what can audiences expect from this stage adaptation of *The Jungle Book*?

“I like to say, expect the unexpected,” says playwright and director Rohit Chokhani. “It is not a musical, it is not a sing-along, it is not one of those commercial productions that you’ve seen in the movie theatre. *The Jungle Book*, as we are presenting it, is going to be unlike a *Jungle Book* ever before.”

Chokhani has chosen to set his adaptation back during the time when author Rudyard Kipling originally wrote it: 19th century India. The production will be vibrantly brought to life by 10 actors playing multiple different characters and fantastical production elements such as mask, movement, dance, puppetry – plus a few more delightful surprises.

“This idea has been two years in the making and I’m thrilled to be given this opportunity to adapt and direct a timeless classic,” he adds.

Joining Alberta Theatre Projects in November of 2021, *The Jungle Book* marks Chokhani’s directorial debut with the company. And the story is one that is near and dear to his heart.

“As a kid growing up in India, I was always drawn to Mowgli’s coming-of-age story. I remember watching the animated series in Hindi on television with friends and family every Sunday morning at 9am,” Chokhani reminisces. “Living in Canada as an adult, I’ve watched many commercial adaptations of *The Jungle Book* and struggled to find the heart of the jungles of India in it. My love for *The Jungle Book* and my desire to tell this story from a new perspective led me to adapt it. This fresh take on *The Jungle Book* is something Calgary has never seen before. It will feel like being on a safari ride through the jungles of India with these iconic characters and references to traditional Indian stories that I grew up hearing from my parents and grandparents. This adaptation of *The Jungle Book* hopes to bring forward the rich cultural stories of India and uncover those backstories without ignoring the literary appreciation as well as the critical discourse around the works of Rudyard Kipling. It appreciates his work and at the same time challenges some of his perspectives in a fun and entertaining manner.”

This production of *The Jungle Book* continues Alberta Theatre Projects’ tradition of programming a new, exciting twist on a familiar classic as the company’s family holiday show offering, with the aim of creating memorable holiday experiences for people and families of all ages, generations, and demographics.

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“Holiday means something different for everyone,” says Chokhani. “For me it’s Diwali. For some folks, it’s Christmas, or the lunar new year, or Hanukkah just to name a few. Our common ground around the holiday spirit is our human need to come together as a community and create memories. *The Jungle Book* was programmed with that intention. The intention to bring people from all walks of life to the theatre, in December, for our holiday show.”

Additionally, Alberta Theatre Projects is excited to once again be presenting the family holiday show in the thrust stage configuration, where a significant portion of the playing stage is brought out into the audience. This creates an intimate world without barriers between audience and performers, helping audience members to feel like they’re a part of the show.

“The thrust configuration allows us to create a really immersive world where you don’t know what to expect – because just like in the jungle, you don’t know what to expect!”

Exploring themes of courage, identity, and seeking to understand our place in the world – *The Jungle Book’s* coming-of-age story is as relevant today as it was when the stories were originally written. Audience members of all ages can look forward to a colourful and dynamic adventure that explores the true meaning of family.

“I’m excited, as an adult, to become a child again to direct this show,” Chokhani adds. “And allow us all to explore that inner child and go on this wild ride of *The Jungle Book*.”

***The Jungle Book* runs from November 29 – December 31 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, there will be an ASL Interpreted performance on Dec 9, and a relaxed performance on Dec 15. For more information on accessible performances, visit albertatheatreprojects.com/accessible-performances.

Audience Considerations: Recommended for ages 6+. This production includes theatrical haze, fog and dramatic sound and light effects including strobing of lights. Please be advised that the play also contains representations of violence between animals, and sometimes between animals and humans as well as depictions of colonization by human characters. Viewer discretion and parental guidance is advised.

Adapted & directed by Rohit Chokhani
Based on the books of Rudyard Kipling

Cast (alphabetical order):

Kit Benz – Tabaqui, Garuda Puppet, Ensemble
Lauren Brady – Rama, Ensemble
Veenesh Dubois – Raksha, Kaa, Prema, Ensemble
Duval Lang – Sher Khan, Rudy, Ensemble
Javelin Laurénce – Bagheera, Ensemble
Kristen Padayas – Akala, Priya, Ensemble
Shrina Patel – Toomai, Geeta, Ensemble
Madeline Sharryse – Big Garuda, Aerial Artist, Ensemble
Mara Teare – Mowgli, Ensemble
Marshall Vielle – Bhaloo, Ensemble

Creative Team:

Playwright, Director: Rohit Chokhani
Associate Director, Puppet Design: Andrew G. Cooper
Dance Choreography, Dance Captain: Shrina Patel
Fight Director: Brianna Johnston

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Set & Props Design: Brian Dudkiewicz
Lighting Design: Jessie Paynter
Costume Design: Deitra Kalyn
Music & Sound Design: Richard Feren
Video Design: Brendan Briceland
Associate Set & Props Design: Ryan Cormack
Vocal Consultant: Jane MacFarlane
Stage Manager: Kate Pallesen
Assistant Stage Manager: Kai Hall
Apprentice Stage Manager: Eden Middleton

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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, November 30, 11:30 – 12:30 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 productions radically explore our space, blurring the line between the audience and the artist through multiple seating configurations each season.

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