

# ALBERTA THEATRE PROJECTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Alberta Theatre Projects announces 2023-24 Season: Short Season, Big Drama!

**CALGARY, September 21, 2023** – Alberta Theatre Projects (ATP) is thrilled to announce their 2023-24 Season... Short Season, Big Drama: a line-up of fantastic performances, all crammed into a shorter season bursting at the seams with drama, comedy, and everything in between. An entertaining season featuring two shows in partnership with Theatre Calgary, a production from the Arts Club Theatre in Vancouver, and an exciting new take on a popular classic.

“Our 2023-24 Season is packed with heart, humour and plenty of surprises,” says Artistic Director, Haysam Kadri. “‘Short Season, Big Drama’ marks a new chapter for ATP, with a renewed commitment to creativity, innovation and excellence.”

The season kicks off this fall with the first show presented in partnership with Theatre Calgary: *Made in Italy* written by Farren Timoteo. Running October 17 to November 11, *Made in Italy* is a lively tour-de-force solo performance by the wonderfully dynamic Canadian theatre artist Farren Timoteo. Francesco, a young Italian immigrant and his father, Salvatore, recall their experiences in 1970s Jasper, Alberta. A semi-autobiographical tale, *Made in Italy* is a comedic chronicle of the generational differences in an immigrant family. Holding dear the traditions of Italy, Salvatore hopes to pass them on to his son, while Francesco finds new role models in Italian cultural icons Rocky Balboa and John Travolta!

Up next is a title that long-time ATP patrons and Canadian theatre fans alike are sure to recognize. After over 25 years, *The Black Bonspiel of Wullie MacCrimmon* by W.O. Mitchell is returning to ATP. A nod to the company’s past, and a springboard into ATP’s 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season next year in 2024-25, this fresh take on a brilliantly funny classic will have audiences rolling in the aisles. When Wullie MacCrimmon, a shoemaker in the 1930s foothills town of Wild Rose, muses aloud that he would give anything to skip his curling team in the MacDonald Brier, the Devil (a travelling salesperson who deals in wholesale souls and retail sin) suddenly appears and makes him an offer. Wullie makes a counter offer, and one of the greatest matches in curling history is on – the Black Bonspiel. When the Devil appears with her curling team--Guy Fawkes (lead), Lizzie Borden (second), and Macbeth (third)--Wullie and his team are in for one hell of a match. Coinciding perfectly with the Scotties Tournament of Hearts in Calgary, *The Black Bonspiel of Wullie MacCrimmon* runs from February 20 – March 10.

“We are excited to bring back a classic Canadian play with a fresh twist,” says Kadri. “*The Black Bonspiel of Wullie MacCrimmon* takes centre stage (ice) as the Scotties Tournament of Hearts sweeps its way into our city! Amidst the hustle and bustle of Calgary in February 2024, all eyes will be on the long-standing traditions of curling and ATP’s storied history, as two iconic institutions coincide to create an unforgettable bonspiel experience.”

The third show, and second Special Presentation with Theatre Calgary, is a world premiere production co-written by Calgarian playwrights Maria Crooks and Caroline Russell-King. *Selma Burke* is the true story of the woman behind the American dime. Few know of Burke, the Black American sculptor who played a major role in the Harlem Renaissance movement of the 1920s and 30s. Among her works is a bas-relief plaque of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, which is now widely accepted to be the basis for the design on the American dime, and something for which she never received credit within her lifetime. Featuring multiple historical figures from the time, *Selma Burke* is a stirring play about the importance of art, courage, romance and justice.

“We are delighted to collaborate on two shows with Theatre Calgary this season, including a world premiere production,” Kadri adds. “These collaborations strengthen our commitment to bring diverse and engaging theatre to our audiences.”

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The fourth and final show of the season will be another exciting one for ATP fans: *The Birds and the Bees* by Mark Crawford, an Arts Club Theatre Company (Vancouver) production. Crawford is the playwright behind the heartwarming and hilarious *The New Canadian Curling Club*, which had a smash-hit production at ATP in the Spring of 2019, and *The Birds and the Bees* offers up more non-stop hilarity and hijinks. Sarah, a turkey farmer, has split up with her husband and moved in with her mom, Gail, a beekeeper. Add in Earl, the flirty neighbour, and Ben, an eager young graduate student, and you have the perfect breeding ground for unlikely attractions. Set in two adjoining bedrooms on a modern Canadian farm, the play tackles sex, love, science, family, and the artificial insemination of turkeys. *The Birds and the Bees* is a laugh-out-loud comedy with brains... and a huge, honeyed heart.

“As we embark on this season, we look to reflect on the rich history and celebrated milestones of our theatre,” says Kadri. “We are grateful for the unwavering support of our patrons and community, whose enthusiasm fuels our passion for theatre. Looking ahead to our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary season in 2024-25, we are eager to explore new artistic horizons that inspire future generations of theatregoers.”

## Show Billings and Dates

**MADE IN ITALY** – October 17 – November 11, 2023

Written by Farren Timoteo

Directed by Daryl Cloran

Presented in partnership with Theatre Calgary

Canadian Play, presented in the Martha Cohen Theatre

**THE BLACK BONSPIEL OF WULLIE MACCRIMMON** – February 20 – March 10, 2024

Written by W.O. Mitchell

Canadian Play, presented in the Martha Cohen Theatre

**SELMA BURKE** – April 2 – April 27, 2024

Written by Maria Crooks and Caroline Russell-King

Directed by Delicia Turner Sonnenberg

Presented in partnership with Theatre Calgary

World Premiere, Canadian Play, presented in the Martha Cohen Theatre

**THE BIRDS AND THE BEES** – May 7 – May 25, 2024

Written by Mark Crawford

Directed by Lauren Taylor

An Arts Club Theatre Company (Vancouver) production, presented by Alberta Theatre Projects

Canadian Play, presented in the Martha Cohen Theatre

**2-Play Subscriptions (which includes *The Black Bonspiel of Wullie MacCrimmon* and *The Birds and the Bees*) and single tickets to Special Presentations *Made in Italy* and *Selma Burke* are available for purchase now at [albertatheatreprojects.com](http://albertatheatreprojects.com). 2-Play Subscriptions start at just \$57. Single tickets to *The Black Bonspiel of Wullie MacCrimmon* and *The Birds and the Bees* will go on sale in October.**

**For more details about Alberta Theatre Projects' upcoming season, please visit [albertatheatreprojects.com](http://albertatheatreprojects.com)**

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# ALBERTA THEATRE PROJECTS

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**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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