

MEDIA RELEASE

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Magnetic North Theatre Festival Celebrates its 10th anniversary in Calgary Line up of Productions and Events Announced

Calgary, AB - Today, Artistic Director **Brenda Leadlay** and Managing Director **Ann Connors** announced the line up for the **10th annual Magnetic North Theatre Festival**, *Canada's National Festival of Contemporary Canadian Theatre in English*. The festival runs **June 13 to 23, 2012** at **nine venues** throughout Calgary, and will feature an extraordinary collection of some of the boldest and brightest theatre artists from across the country. Alongside eight mainstage plays, festival-goers will enjoy ancillary events including *Magnetic Encounters*, *Compass Points* and the *Industry Series*. Tickets for the festival are on sale now from our Host Partner, **EPCOR CENTRE for the Performing Arts** box office in person, online at www.magneticnorthfestival.ca, www.epcorcentre.org or by phoning **403-294-9494**.

Opening the festival is ***Oil & Water***, by Newfoundland's award-winning **Artistic Fraud**. ***Oil & Water*** is the theatrical retelling of the incredible true story of Lanier Phillips. Shipwrecked aboard the US Truxton in 1942, Mr. Phillips was the only African-American survivor. What happened to this son of the racially segregated south at the hands of the residents of the nearby town of St. Lawrence, NL forever altered his world. Featuring an a capella score blending Newfoundland folk tradition with African-American gospel.

A favorite of the Magnetic North Festival is Calgary's **Old Trout Puppet Workshop** with their newest creation, ***Ignorance***, a puppet documentary about the evolution of happiness. Happiness - where did it come from and where did it go? As a current society, we've got microwaves, airplanes, and a nagging sense of dissatisfaction – but our prehistoric ancestors, stamping their grubby feet by firelight in triumph over the corpse of a mastodon, might just have felt more at home in the world. With much grunting and gnawing on bones, the **Old Trouts** explain where we went wrong, and how we might find our way once again.

Vancouver based **Carmen Aguirre**, winner of this year's CBC's Canada Reads, brings her one-woman show to the festival. ***Blue Box*** investigates Aguirre's remarkable life as an underground revolutionary in Chile. It's a story of terror, romance, and abandon that takes us from the dangerous mountain passes of Chile to the perilous roller coasters of Hollywood; from an ardent love affair with a TV star, to a passionate love for a revolution that strove to change an entire nation.

Magnetic North is thrilled to introduce exciting new playwright **Mani Soleymanlou** by co-commissioning the English translation of his French language play ***ONE/UN***. In this autobiographical script, **Mani Soleymanlou** traces his own journey from his birthplace in Iran to his current residence in Montreal. This journey leads the author to question the authenticity of his own Persian origins, which seem small and insignificant compared to the Persian youth currently living in Iran, who must fight daily for their liberty, their freedom of speech, their country, and their lives.

30-year-old Iranian playwright **Nassim Soleimanpour's** arresting and allegorical work, ***White Rabbit, Red Rabbit***, dissects the experience of a whole generation in a wild, utterly original play. Soleimanpour turns his isolation to his own advantage with this truly experiential piece. Each night an acclaimed Canadian actor is invited to the stage, and handed a sealed envelope containing a script the actor has never before seen or read. Featuring; **Daniel MacIvor**, **Rebecca Northan**, **Sheldon Elter** and **Denise Clarke**.

In ***Night***, the lives of Daniella, a Toronto anthropologist and Piuyuq, a 16-year-old Inuk girl intersect powerfully during 24 hours of darkness in Pond Inlet, Nunavut. A cross-cultural theatre creation by **Human Cargo**, ***Night*** is a poetic and dramatic exploration of the clash between Inuit and colonial culture. As the two cross paths, their lives are changed forever. ***Night*** is presented in Inuktitut and English, with English subtitles, likely the first time both languages have been used so extensively in a professional play.

Since its premiere in 2006, **Hamlet (Solo)** has toured internationally to critical acclaim. This exciting one-man version of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, performed by accomplished and award-winning performer **Raoul Bhaneja**, has him playing seventeen characters. This thrilling adaptation focuses on the three most essential elements of theatre: The Actor, The Text and The Audience. This production is "bare bones" in its presentation, but complex in its telling.

Toronto's **Cahoots Theatre Company** brings **paper SERIES** to the festival. A piece of paper can shape your life. It can record your history or build something new. **paper SERIES** is a collection of six short plays exploring how we use paper to create, amuse, define and communicate. It is, at times, quiet and reflective, raucous and violent...changing tone with every fold.

For one night only Magnetic North proudly brings to Calgary **Rick Mercer** with his new keynote **A Nation Worth Ranting About**. Unashamedly proud, fiercely skeptical, and endlessly entertaining, Mercer knows Canada is a country worth laughing about, cheering about, and occasionally getting angry about. He reveals hypocrisy at the highest reaches of power. And he draws our attention to hardworking, unsung heroes. Mercer's unrivaled genius is his ability to make you laugh at, question, think about, and, most of all, appreciate this glorious country we all share.

Magnetic North Theatre Festival goes beyond presenting the best of Canadian contemporary theatre by hosting ancillary events designed to build and strengthen the Canadian theatre community. These events will engage and involve the local community, as well as theatre students and professionals from across Canada.

Magnetic Encounters are designed to deepen the relationship between the festival artists and audiences in the host community. **Magnetic Encounters** takes the performers outside the theatres for free, public events that include a concert, readings, civic engagement and in-depth discussions around practice and creativity. As part of **Magnetic Encounters**, Magnetic North is also proud to partner with the Calgary-based theatre company **Downstage** to co-produce the **Uprising Festival**; showcasing three dynamic Calgary productions; **In the Wake** by the Downstage Creation Ensemble (Downstage), **Marg Szkaluba (Pissy's Wife)** by Ron Chambers, featuring Sharon Pollock (Verb Theatre) and **Raunch** by Alice Nelson and Jacqueline Russell .

Compass Points is a gathering of post-secondary students and emerging artists from across the country which helps them navigate the Festival and offers a first-hand introduction to the professional theatre industry. Organized in consultation with students from the **University of Calgary** and emerging artists from across the nation, the weeklong event consists of workshops, panel discussions, and social events, all designed to inspire participants to chart their own course in Canadian theatre.

Ghost River Theatre will host Magnetic North Theatre Festival's **Industry Series**. Working closely with the Festival, **Ghost River Theatre** will provide four days of opportunities for theatre artists from across Canada to spark conversations about the current state and future of the industry. **Industry Series** will include professional symposiums dedicated to building networks and sharing knowledge including a keynote event with Calgary Mayor **Naheed Nenshi** discussing culture and civic life.

Tickets for Magnetic North are **on sale now** from our Host Partner, **EPCOR CENTRE for the Performing Arts** box office in person, online at www.magneticnorthfestival.ca or www.epcorcentre.org or by phoning **403-294-9494**.

The Magnetic North Theatre Festival is produced by the Canadian Theatre Festival Society and co-presented by the National Arts Centre English Theatre.

The **Magnetic North Theatre Festival** is an annual Canadian cultural theatre event, showcasing works by Canadian theatre artists from across the country. Magnetic North features some of the most exciting productions of theatre performed in English to tour Canada, and promotes the diversity and quality of Canadian theatre to Canadians. Established in 2002, the Magnetic North Theatre Festival alternates between Ottawa and a different Canadian city each year. In addition to live theatre, the festival is a forum for Canadian theatre professionals to market their work to national and international presenters and touring venues. To date, the festival has travelled from Ottawa to Edmonton, St. John's, Vancouver and Kitchener-Waterloo.

www.magneticnorthfestival.ca

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