

**Statement by Chair of the Canadian Theatre Festival Society
Wednesday 22 March 2017**

Magnetic North Theatre Festival Cancelled

The Board of Directors of the Canadian Theatre Festival Society announced today that it is cancelling the *Magnetic North Theatre Festival*. The Festival was scheduled for 16-24 June 2017 in various arts venues in Ottawa, including the National Arts Centre, la Nouvelle Scène, and Ottawa Arts Court. As a result, the seven productions from across Canada, programmed prior to Artistic Director Brendan Healy's appointment in November 2016, as well as its annual Industry Series for professionals in the Canadian and International theatre, are cancelled.

The Board profoundly regrets this decision and its impact on staff, artists, our funders and partners and theatre professionals. The Society cannot continue to produce the Festival under its current financial circumstances. We have looked at all the options to be able to proceed in some capacity, but regrettably none is viable.

While the accumulated deficit has been reduced by half over the past five years, the magnitude of the financial challenges and the continued pressure of an accumulated deficit make the festival untenable.

The Board deeply appreciates Artistic Director Brendan Healy for his dedication to the organization and was looking forward to implementing his vision for the Festival beyond 2017, and Nancy Oakley, the recently-appointed Managing Director, for her commitment and determination to bring the 2017 Festival to fruition. The Festival's problems are beyond the capacity of these two fine theatre leaders to resolve.

Magnetic North has had an immeasurable impact on Canadian theatre. This significant 15-year legacy is the result of efforts of a great many people. On behalf of the Board, I wish to express gratitude for the extraordinary work of current and past management, staff, Board members, the National Resource Council, donors and volunteers.

I would also pay tribute and express our gratitude to the Board, management and staff of the NAC for their ongoing support over the years of the Festival's existence.

Mike Hawkes
Chair
Canadian Theatre Festival Society

Magnetic North Theatre Festival

In 2001, a passionate group of theatre professionals from across the country championed the creation of a Festival to showcase Canadian theatre productions to help foster audiences for emerging and contemporary theatre companies in Canada and internationally. Making its home base in Ottawa, the Festival is unique among Canadian theatre festivals because of its traveling nature. It has hosted the festival in the nation's capital every second year and its one-of-a-kind mandate has also seen it travel to a new host community across Canada every other year.

Since the launch of Canada's Magnetic North Theatre Festival in 2003 under the artistic leadership of Mary Vingoe, it has appeared in Ottawa biannually and presented in Edmonton (2004), St. John's (2006), Vancouver (2008), Kitchener-Waterloo (2010), Calgary (2012), Halifax (2014) and Whitehorse (2016).

The Festival has also provided an annual forum for Canada's theatre industry to gather to explore ideas and concepts in theatre practice, and support the growth of touring and presenting networks across Canada. Its Industry Series has helped launch touring Canadian theatre across the country and into the world, providing economic opportunities for Canadian theatre professionals to promote their wide range of practices and expertise. Many theatre professionals and companies testify to the Festival's impact on their careers and for opportunities to tour in Canada and internationally.