

## Alberta Theatre Projects Announces Vanessa Porteous as Artistic Director Designate.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**January 14<sup>th</sup> 2008, Calgary, AB – President of the Board of Directors J'Val Shuster announced Vanessa Porteous as Artistic Director Designate of Alberta Theatre Projects. Ms. Porteous will serve as the fourth Artistic Leader in the renowned Canadian Theatre Company's thirty six year history.**

A renowned director and dramaturg based in Calgary, Ms. Porteous is celebrated for her dedication and commitment to new Canadian play development. A familiar face among the Alberta Theatre Projects team, Ms. Porteous was Alberta Theatre Projects' Festival Dramaturg from 1998 to 2006 where she oversaw the world premieres of over **30 new Canadian plays** as part of the annual **Enbridge playRites Festival**. Other directing credits with Alberta Theatre Projects include *The Syringa Tree* by Pamela Gien (remounted in 2008 due to popular demand), *Pinocchio* by The Old Trout Puppet Workshop in collaboration with Vanessa Porteous (2004), *Plan B* by Michael Healey (2003), *Proof* by David Auburn (2002), *The Hobbit* adapted by Kim Selody (2001) and *Respectable* by Ron Chambers (2001).

Ms. Porteous' career is distinguished by her ability to excel in many styles of material including puppetry, theatre with music, and recently, opera. In the last two years, she directed the opera *The Enchanted Child* (Calgary Opera Emerging Artists, 2008), went to Mexico to workshop her upcoming production with The Old Trout Puppet Workshop in summer 2008, and served as Production Dramaturg on the world premiere of *The Wars* based on the novel by Timothy Findley (Theatre Calgary, 2007). Over the last nine years, Vanessa's productions in Calgary have been nominated for 19 Betty Mitchell Awards in various categories, including 4 nominations for Outstanding Production of a Play or Musical.

President of the Board of Directors J'Val Shuster states: "We are delighted to be making this announcement today. We are confident that Vanessa will take Alberta Theatre Projects boldly into its future. We were looking for a risk taker, an audience and community builder, and someone who would ensure that Alberta Theatre Projects produces and creates plays that are relevant and important to both Calgarians and Canadians."

Managing Director Greg Epton elaborates: "Ms. Porteous' acclaimed and wide-ranging body of work as a director and dramaturg complements the existing height of excellence set by Mr. White and the rest of the team at Alberta Theatre Projects. Her appointment launches a new era, one that will honour the company's commitment to producing a season of celebrated contemporary theatre, taking a national leadership role in the development of new Canadian plays and making an enduring contribution to community by delivering our LEGACY (Lifelong Education and Growth for Artists, Community and Youth) Program."

In accepting the position, Ms. Porteous comments: "For me, Alberta Theatre Projects is the most appealing theatre company in Canada - thanks to its incredible staff; its beautiful, charming performance space, the Martha Cohen Theatre; and above all, its commitment to theatre that is directly engaged with the times we live in - theatre about being alive right now. I feel that nothing could be more exciting for an audience, nor more important for a theatre company, than that. I am so, so honoured to be entrusted with the next phase of its life, and I really look forward to the adventure."

In endorsing Vanessa Porteous, Artistic Director Bob White says: "We are thrilled to welcome Vanessa back to Alberta Theatre Projects. Her work in new play development and commitment to the contemporary repertoire is respected throughout the country. She has imagination, authority and indeed all the qualities essential in an Artistic Director."

Mr. White's contract continues until the end of the 2008/2009 Season. He is currently directing *The Clockmaker* by Stephen Massicotte as part of the **23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Enbridge playRites Festival of New Canadian Plays**, and will choose the 2009/2010 season to be announced on March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009. He will work with Ms. Porteous through May and June to ensure a smooth transition. In the coming months before joining the team at Alberta Theatre Projects in May, Ms Porteous will direct the world premiere of Eugene Stickland's new work, *Queen Lear* at Urban Curvz Theatre and collaborate again with The Old Trout Puppet Workshop on the second to last show of Alberta Theatre Project's season, *Don Juan: The Greatest Lover In the World*.

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