



ALBERTA THEATRE PROJECTS

## NEW PLAY 1979 EXPLORES THE COMEDIC SIDE OF CONSERVATIVE POLITICS

*A funny and biting battle of wits based on real events featuring Albertan politicians Joe Clark and Stephen Harper rounds out ATP's 2016-17 season.*

**CALGARY, ALBERTA** – Canadian playwriting legend Michael Healey returns to [Alberta Theatre Projects](#) from **April 4 – April 22, 2017** with the world premiere of his latest political comedy, **1979**. Blending reality with a heavy dose of fiction, the play takes the audience on a comedic romp through the wood-panelled corridors of Canadian power in the moments leading up to the budget vote in December of 1979 that led to the demise of Progressive Conservative Prime Minister Joe Clark's minority government after only 6 months in office. Featuring several of Canada's most notorious political figures of the era including Pierre Trudeau, Brian Mulroney and Stephen Harper, the play is a witty and thought-provoking rumination on power and the lengths politicians will go to get it, keep it and use it.

"Having the show premiere against the backdrop of current events like the recent leadership race for the PCs here in Alberta, and the ongoing battle for the leadership of the Conservative Party of Canada, it's clear that conflicts presented in *1979* are incredibly relevant to the political climate in Canada right now," says director Miles Potter. "Only the hairstyles have changed."

*1979* marks Potter's third collaboration with Healey as playwright, having directed the premieres of his plays *Proud* and *The Drawer Boy*. The final show of ATP's all-Canadian season is also Healey's third play at ATP, following productions of Governor General's Award-winning *The Drawer Boy* (2001), and *Plan B* (2003).

"I can't tell you how proud I am to be bringing *1979* to the stage," says Vanessa Porteous, ATP's Artistic Director. "When Michael told me he was working on a Joe Clark play, I was first in line. For over a decade he has specialized in revealing the comic savagery that lurks under Canada's political culture, and his humour is right at home here at ATP."

The production features Toronto-based actor Philip Riccio in the role of Joe Clark, and local talents Christopher Hunt and Jamie Konchak playing the revolving door of larger-than-life political figures in his entourage.

**1979** runs from **April 4 to April 22** at the **Martha Cohen Theatre** at Arts Commons (215 8 Ave. SE). Tickets are available at [www.atplive.com](http://www.atplive.com) or 403-294-7402.

The play contains some strong language and mature content and is suggested for audiences over the age of 16.

### Creative Team

Michael Healey (Playwright)  
Miles Potter (Director/Dramaturg)  
Laurel Green (Production Dramaturg)

Scott Reid (Set & Projection Designer)  
David Fraser (Lighting Designer)  
Jennifer Arsenault (Costume Designer)  
Thomas Geddes (Sound Designer)  
Patti Neice (Stage Manager)  
Emma Slunt (Apprentice Stage Manager)  
Taylor Hicks (University of Calgary Intern)

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**For media enquiries, please contact:**

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Media kit and high-resolution images, video and sound recordings available at  
[www.atplive.com/media](http://www.atplive.com/media)

**PHOTO & VIDEO CALL** for photography, videography and cast interviews on **Tuesday, April 4**  
at **12:30 PM** at the Martha Cohen Theatre.

**ABOUT ALBERTA THEATRE PROJECTS**

Alberta Theatre Projects is a Calgary-based, not-for-profit, professional theatre company that celebrates the art of live theatre. From its home in The Martha Cohen Theatre at Arts Commons, the company produces world-calibre shows with a focus on idea-driven new works, plays by Canadian playwrights, and contemporary theatre from around the world. It is also a national leader in new play development and dramaturgy.

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