



ALBERTA THEATRE PROJECTS

ATP ANNOUNCES DEPARTURE OF ARTISTIC DIRECTOR VANESSA PORTEOUS AFTER 2016-17 SEASON

Local theatre artist stepping down after 8 seasons to be with family.

CALGARY, ALBERTA – [Alberta Theatre Projects](#) has announced today that, after eight seasons, **Vanessa Porteous** will be stepping down as the company’s Artistic Director as of July 31, 2017. Porteous, who has worked with the Calgary-based, not-for-profit theatre company in various roles for over 19 years, made the decision to leave her position for personal and family reasons.

In a statement, Porteous explained, “Due to illness in my family, I regret that I will be unable to continue to provide artistic leadership to the organization that has been my home for nearly 20 years. Leaving the company under these circumstances is enormously difficult, but I have great faith in my colleagues, and I will remain their staunchest supporter after my departure. I will never get over the feeling of being at ATP, among friends, making magic. It has been the greatest privilege of my working life so far.”

In her time serving as Artistic Director since taking over the role from Bob White in 2009, Porteous upheld the company’s longstanding mission of supporting Canadian playwrights in the creation of new works of theatre and oversaw the programming of 8 ambitious seasons of plays rooted in relevance to our modern lives, emotion, humour and thoughtfulness. ATP and its season artists were awarded over 50 Betty Mitchell Awards under Porteous’ artistic leadership. She also championed inclusiveness and bringing new voices to the stage by presenting seasons that strived for gender parity in the artistic teams, and encouraged directors to cast their plays diversely. These deliberate efforts, along with other community and youth engagement programs she oversaw, have been reflected in the company’s growing and increasingly diverse audience.

In addition to serving the company as Artistic Director, Porteous also maintained her direct involvement in the work presented on ATP’s home stage at the Martha Cohen Theatre at Arts Commons, most recently acting as the dramaturg for the company’s 2016 Family Holiday Show *Slipper: A Distinctly Calgarian Cinderella Story* – which finished among ATP’s top ten most commercially successful productions. She will also be directing the upcoming world premiere of [Gracie](#) by Joan Macleod, running at ATP from February 28 to March 18, 2017, as well as selecting and programming the plays that will be part of the company’s 2017-18 season.

“On behalf of ATP’s Board of Directors and staff, I extend our most sincere thanks to Vanessa for her longstanding leadership and service to ATP; I wish her and her family comfort and strength as they deal with the challenges ahead,” said Board Chair Anne J. Brown.

Following Porteous’ departure at the end of the 2016-17 season, ATP will be adopting a new, interim artistic leadership structure for the duration of the 2017-18 season. The company will continue to be led by **Vicki Stroich**, who has been with ATP since 1999, working as Artistic Associate and Dramaturg until she became the company’s Executive Director in 2013. Additionally, Stroich served as Interim Artistic Director for the 2012-13 season while Porteous was on maternity leave. She will be supported by newly appointed Director of Artistic Programming **Laurel Green**, as well as ATP’s full-time staff and Board of Directors.

“Vanessa and I have worked closely together for many, many years and we will miss her greatly. I look forward to continuing to pursue the vision for ATP that we have jointly stewarded and celebrating Vanessa’s work as a programmer, director and leader by building on the significant contributions she has made. All of us are looking forward to the season she is planning for 2017-2018,” said Stroich.

The company is planning to celebrate Porteous’ legacy with an event honouring her before her official departure, the details of which will be announced at a later date.

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Media kits, high-resolution images and videos available for download at www.atplive.com/media

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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