

November 21, 2017 | FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



ALBERTA THEATRE PROJECTS

## **CHARLOTTE'S WEB WEAVES A HEARTWARMING SPELL OVER CALGARY FOR THE HOLIDAYS**

*Infused with more fun than ever, Alberta Theatre Projects brings an all-new version of E.B. White's timeless story of friendship and love to the stage for the whole family this holiday season.*

**CALGARY, ALBERTA** – Starting Tuesday, November 21, [Alberta Theatre Projects](#) is bringing the wonder and awe of the timeless children's classic [Charlotte's Web](#) to Calgary for a six week run over the holiday season. Adapted for the stage from E.B. White's original 1952 novel by Tony Award-nominated playwright Joseph Robinette, this all-new staging is filled with all the spectacle and pageantry live theatre fans have come to expect from a holiday production. Featuring aerial acrobatics and live music, it's the perfect family outing for the whole family.

Actor, circus performer and native-Calgarian Léda Davies is making her ATP debut as the story's heroine, Charlotte: a very special gray spider who strikes up an unlikely friendship with a piglet named Wilbur, played by Calgary-based Tenaj Williams. In her portrayal of the motherly arachnid, Davies performs a series of impressive aerial acrobatics dangling from over 30 feet above the stage on special fabric known as 'aerial silks', using her own strength to climb and descend without the assistance of a harness, or safety net.

Davies and Williams are supported by an impressive cast of human characters and their critter counterparts, with many of the actors playing multiple roles. Fern Arable, the young heroine who initially persuades her parents John (Philip Fulton, who also doubles as The Gander) and Martha (Sarah Wheeldon, also playing The Sheep) to spare Wilbur – the runt of his litter – from the axe, is played by Annabel Beames in her ATP debut. Her older brother, Avery, played by Aubrey Baux (also

playing The Lamb) is at first resistant to the charms of the little pig, but soon falls under Wilbur's spell along with everyone else at the farm. Rounding out the cast are Stafford Perry playing Fern and Avery's uncle Homer Zuckerman, Nadien Chu who plays their aunt Edith as well as The Goose, and actor and playwright Geoffrey Simon Brown who plays both the Zuckerman's farmhand Lurvy and Templeton the Rat.

Set designer Anton de Groot returns to set the stage for the tale that he first designed for ATP back in 2014, but this time with a new aesthetic. Recently named one of [Avenue Magazine's Top 40 Under 40](#), de Groot's set and lighting designs for *Charlotte's Web* are at once nostalgic and modern, as well as intimate, whimsical and majestic – turning a humble barn into a fitting setting for the miracles of Charlotte and Wilbur's friendship to play out.

Inspired by the original book's illustrations by Garth Williams, Jen Arsenault's costume design brings the story into the modern age, and also does double duty with costumes that transform the humans onstage into their animal characters.

Though not a musical in a strictest sense, the play is largely underscored with an originally composed folk-inspired score by local musician Ethan Cole.

This production of *Charlotte's Web* also marks resident Director of Programming Laurel Green's directorial debut at ATP, after serving as Assistant Director on the company's 2014 version.

"I loved the book as a kid, so directing this show is a dream come true," says Green. "E.B. White was a beautiful writer who really respected his audience, even when he was writing for kids, and I always appreciated that."

Green thinks kids and adults will both find a lot to like in the all-new version of the show, even if they've never read the book or seen a previous version of the show. "As an adult I think it's great to be able to pass something down to younger generations of kids or grandkids. And though the story is on one hand very poignant, there's also a lot of

laughs and a very wholesome feeling of joy to this production that makes it perfect to see with family and friends around the holidays.”

"There's a reason *Charlotte's Web* is considered a classic kids' book: its themes and values are both enduring and universal," says Ashley Meller, director of Marketing & Communications. "At a time when the world feels more divided than ever, we think the holidays are a perfect time to remind ourselves that regardless of religion, politics, or species there is no divide so great that kindness and friendship can't bridge."

*Charlotte's Web* runs from **November 21 to December 31** 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 is suggested for audiences ages 5+.

Follow the hashtag **#ATPCharlottesWeb** on Twitter and Instagram for the latest news about this production.

### **Cast**

Aubrey Baux (Avery Arable/Lamb)  
Annabel Beames (Fern Arable)  
Geoffrey Simon Brown (Lurvy/Templeton)  
Nadien Chu (Edith Zuckerman/Goose)  
Ethan Cole (Musician/Announcer, Composition)  
Léda Davies (Charlotte, Aerial Movement Creator)  
Philip Fulton (John Arable/As Cast)  
Stafford Perry (Homer Zuckerman/Uncle Pig, Fight Director)  
Sarah Wheeldon (Martha Arable/Sheep)  
Tenaj Williams (Wilbur)

### **Creative Team**

Joseph Robinette (Adapting Playwright)  
Laurel Green (Director)  
Anton DeGroot (Set/Lighting Design)  
Jen Arsenault (Costume Design)  
Thomas Geddes (Sound Design)  
Jane MacFarlane (Vocal Coach)  
Poe Limkul (Assistant Lighting Designer)

Kerry Johnson (Stage Manager)  
Nicole Bergen (Assistant Stage Manager)  
Sydney Hunt (D. Michael Dobbin Apprentice)  
Kate Pallesen (Child Supervisor)

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High-resolution images and video available for download  
at [www.atplive.com/media](http://www.atplive.com/media)

**PHOTO & VIDEO CALL** for photography, videography and cast  
interviews on **Wednesday, November 22 at 11:00 AM** 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.

[www.ATPlive.com](http://www.ATPlive.com)

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