



MEDIA RELEASE

SOULPEPPER ADDS TWO NEW WORLD PREMIERES TO ITS SPRING 2019 LINEUP

Toronto, ON – December 4, 2018: Soulpepper Theatre Company today announced the addition of two new World Premieres to its 2019 Spring season lineup: *Welcome To My Underworld*, with RARE Theatre Company, and *The Black Drum*, a new ASL musical from the DEAF CULTURE CENTRE. Both productions bring the experiences of diverse communities to the stages at Young Centre for the Performing Arts in cross-cultural collaborations that audiences can enjoy. Single tickets are on sale now. Visit soulpepper.ca for tickets and more details.

In Soulpepper's fifth partnership with RARE Theatre Company, Canadian theatre pioneer and two-time Governor General award-winner **Judith Thompson** directs and dramaturges the World Premiere of *Welcome To My Underworld*, bringing together the work of eight blazing-hot Canadian playwrights into one singular gripping journey.

Gate-crashing ideas and fresh, bold language are brought to the stage to illuminate the shift in human identity and the search for one's truest self. Written from a diverse collective of voices, the World Premiere of *Welcome To My Underworld* features work from **Bilal Baig** (*Acha Bachā*), a queer Muslim artist; **Ellen Ringler**, an artist who has navigated the mental health system; **Nikoletta Erdelyi** (*Borne*), a published writer who uses a wheelchair; **Radha Sciara-Menon**, a South Asian British-Canadian playwright; **Grace Campbell** (*My Nightmares Wear White*), an artist living with a disability, **Maddie Bautista** (*Love You Wrong Time*, Soulpepper Shen Festival), a Saudi Arabia-born Filipino artist; **Simone Dalton**, a queer Trinidadian-Canadian playwright; and **Carolyn Heatherington**, an 89 year old internationally acclaimed actress and playwright.

In June, Soulpepper is pleased to support the DEAF CULTURE CENTRE and the extraordinary signed musical, *The Black Drum* – elevating the artistic work of the Deaf community beyond ASL interpretations. Commissioned and produced by the Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf, the World Premiere of *The Black Drum* by Deaf Canadian playwright **Adam Pottle**, tells the story of a young woman, whose life is upturned when her tattoos come alive and propel her on a fantastical journey in search of her own inner music.

World famous Norwegian director **Mira Zuckermann**, weaves together dance, signed music, projection, tattoo art, and movement into a performance of visual rhythms from the heart, with a refined mix of Deaf artistry, with designs from **Maryam Hafizirad** (Assistant Set & Costume/Tattoo Artist); **Chris Malkowski** (Lighting); **Ruth Albertyn** (Costume); and Soulpepper Resident Artist **Ken MacKenzie** (Set).

Featuring a world-class collective of celebrated Deaf artists including **Dawn Jani Birley** (*Prince Hamlet*), **Yan Liu** (*Thousand-hand Bodhisattva*), **Bob Hiltermann** (*Beethoven's Nightmare*), **Daniel Durant** (Deaf West's *Spring Awakening*), and **Corinna Den Dekker**, *The Black Drum* is a rhythmic telling of their story in the world's first entirely Deaf musical theatre that is not originally a sound based work. This production is presented with an English synopsis and is accessible to non-ASL audiences.

Welcome To My Underworld runs from May 8 to 25, opening on May 9, 2019. *The Black Drum* runs from June 15 to June 30, opening on June 20, 2019. Single tickets for both shows go on sale today, starting at \$40 for *Welcome To My Underworld* and \$50 for *The Black Drum*. Tickets for ODSP Cardholders are available to *Welcome To My Underworld* for \$25. Soulpepper subscribers can add both productions to their packages with exclusive subscriber discounts.

For more details about additional ticket prices visit soulpepper.ca or call the Young Centre Box Office at 416.866.8666.

RARE THEATRE COMPANY

RARE Theatre serves communities that have expressed a need to not only be recognized, but to effect systemic, radical change through the art of theatre. RARE reaches out and finds the theatre artists in those communities who wish to create work for the stage, either through documentary theatre (*Rare*, *Borne*) or plays created for the performers specifically using stories told in extensive workshops. (*Wildfire*, *After the Blackout*).

Welcome To My Underworld is supported by the Ontario Trillium Foundation and Toronto Arts Council. For information about RARE Theatre Company visit raretheatre.org.



DEAF CULTURE CENTRE

The DEAF CULTURE CENTRE is a project of the Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf (CCSD), and provides a forum to celebrate Deaf life through the arts. It opened in the Distillery District in Toronto in 2006, featuring a museum, art gallery, gift shop, archives and multimedia production. Open to the public and rooted in the Deaf community, it provides education, culture, visual and performing arts. The Centre hosts over 15,000 visitors and mentors over 90 students and interns annually and promotes Deaf artists of all ages through art exhibits each year.

The Black Drum is supported by the Canada Council for the Arts New Chapter program. For more information about the Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf and DEAF CULTURE CENTRE visit deafculturecentre.ca.



Located in its multi-venue home, the Young Centre for the Performing Arts in Toronto's Distillery Historic District, Soulpepper is Toronto's largest not-for-profit theatre company. Founded and guided by artists, Soulpepper has an integrated mission which includes: industry-leading youth and community outreach initiatives; artist training and mentorship programs; and a year-round diverse repertory season which is grounded in the classics and committed to the creation of new works, new forms, and innovative practices. Tickets to Soulpepper productions are available by calling the Young Centre Box Office at 416.866.8666 or by visiting soulpepper.ca.

The artists and staff of Soulpepper and the Young Centre for the Performing Arts acknowledge the original caretakers and storytellers of this land - the Mississaugas of the New Credit, the Haudenosaunee, the Anishinaabe, and the Wendat First Nations. We commit to honouring and celebrating their past, present and future.

Soulpepper believes all people have a right to express their individuality, to experience creative freedom, to feel safe at all times, and to be treated with dignity and respect.

Soulpepper gratefully acknowledges annual operating support from the Ontario Arts Council, the Toronto Arts Council, and the Canada Council for the Arts. Soulpepper is pleased to recognize the donors of transformational gifts to its Creative Capital Campaign: The Michael Young Family Foundation; The Slight Family; The Government of Ontario; Gail Drummond and Bob Dorrance; Kevin and Roger Garland; Ada Slight; and Richard Wernham and Julia West. Support for the Soulpepper Academy is provided by the RBC Foundation, and the Canada Arts Training Program at the Department of Canadian Heritage.

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