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MEDIA RELEASE

SOULPEPPER'S PROVINCIAL TOURING PROJECT A NATIONAL CIVIC THEATRE INITIATIVE

Toronto, ON – July 23, 2015: Albert Schultz, Founding Artistic Director of Soulpepper Theatre Company, today confirmed funding from the Government of Ontario to establish a ground-breaking provincial touring project over the next four years. The support of \$1.5 million, part of the company's previously announced Creative Capital Campaign and National Civic Theatre initiatives, will be provided as an investment aimed at connecting theatre audiences in Ontario with Soulpepper's award-winning programming. As Toronto's largest not-for-profit theatre, with one of North America's largest repertory theatre programs and the country's only two-year paid training program for artists, Soulpepper is uniquely positioned to take its artistic company across the province.

"We're very proud of our productions and the great response we receive from audiences," said Schultz. "We feel it is our responsibility to share our work with as wide an audience as possible, in communities large and small outside of Toronto. We could spend a lot of time and money trying to get them to come to us, but we think it is more worthwhile if we go to them. Thanks to the generous support of the Province of Ontario, we look forward to building relationships with those communities – the audiences, the artists, and the businesses – and to providing new opportunities for the Soulpepper ensemble."

"The Province of Ontario is proud to make this investment in strengthening a successful Ontario-made brand," said The Hon. Deb Matthews, Deputy Premier, President of the Treasury Board & Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy. "This project will help a leading company reach new markets and result in more employment opportunities for emerging and established artists."

With its core acting ensemble drawn from across Canada, Soulpepper is committed to sharing the talents of its artists with communities large and small. The model of Soulpepper's successful national tour of *Kim's Convenience* in 2013 and 2014 made the show one of the most widely-seen new Canadian plays, and established relationships between Soulpepper and theatres across Canada, including Ontario theatres such as The Grand in London and The National Arts Centre in Ottawa.

"I'm proud of our government's ongoing commitment to arts and culture," said The Hon. Michael Coteau, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. "By investing in the sector, we're helping to create jobs and provide opportunities for our province's creative talent – like the local actors, musicians, writers, set designers and technicians who help make live theatre so entertaining and meaningful. For years, Soulpepper has delighted audiences with performances at the Young Centre in Toronto. Now, thanks to our investment, theatre lovers across Ontario will get a chance to enjoy them in their own backyard. That's great news for theatre in Ontario."

This year the company has toured to, or is booked for shows in: Oakville; Port Hope; Kingston; Richmond Hill; and Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario; and Chester, Nova Scotia. Support from the Province will allow the company to build upon previously established touring connections, and reach out to additional theatres to program from Soulpepper's acclaimed productions.

"We were excited to have the opportunity to bring the best of Toronto theatre to Oakville with Soulpepper's production of *The Dining Room* as part of our 2014-2015 season," said Robin Howarth, Theatre Manager, Oakville Centre. "Soulpepper did not disappoint. Our loyal community theatre audience came out to the show and we were also able to develop a new audience of theatre fans. Soulpepper provided one of the most professionally exciting pieces of dramatic theatre that the Oakville Centre has ever seen. It is rare for our venue to have access to a touring theatre production of this calibre."



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“I have long been an admirer of Soulpepper and of Albert Schultz,” said Tricia Baldwin, Director of the new Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts in Kingston, ON. “They have led the charge in the arts of establishing a whole new model of art creation and they are fostering a generation of artists who work collaboratively, who are passionately connecting with new audiences, and who can genuinely partner with supporters to make big artistic dreams come to fruition. We are thrilled that Soulpepper so actively cares about communities outside of Toronto.”

Beyond providing access to Soulpepper’s award-winning programming and new employment opportunities, the funding will also allow for youth mentorship, artist training and outreach events in communities across Ontario.

“On behalf of the artists, board and staff at Soulpepper I would like to sincerely thank the Province of Ontario for recognizing and supporting this forward-thinking initiative,” said Schultz. “We look forward to sharing our work and connecting with new audiences.”



Tickets to Soulpepper productions at the Young Centre for the Performing Arts are available by calling the Young Centre Box Office at 416.866.8666 or by visiting soulpepper.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 theatre company. Founded and guided by artists, under the leadership of Artistic Director Albert Schultz and Executive Director Leslie Lester, Soulpepper has an integrated mission which includes: industry-leading youth outreach initiatives; the Soulpepper Academy, Canada’s only multi-year paid professional training program for theatre artists of all disciplines; 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.

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; Ada Slight; and Richard Wernham & Julia West.

Support for all music programming is provided by the Slight Family through the Slight Family Music Program. Mike Ross is the inaugural Slight Family Director of Music. Lead Support for the Soulpepper Academy is provided by the Michael and Karen Vukets Family Foundation, with additional support from the RBC Foundation and Hal Jackman Foundation and the Canada Arts Training Program at the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Soulpepper is grateful for the Major Sponsorship Support of:

TELUS – Lead Sponsor Youth Outreach

Scotiabank – Lead Sponsor Soulpepper City Youth Academy

TD Bank – Lead Sponsor Stage Play and Studio Series

CIBC – Lead Sponsor Soulpepper Family Festival

SunLife – Lead Sponsor Rush Program

Support for Soulpepper Productions is provided by:

3Macs: *Bedroom Farce*

Gretchen Ross: *The Play’s the Thing*

Middlefield: *A Moveable Musical Maritime Feast; American Pie – A Songbook Investigation; Route 66 – The Heartland*

Polar Securities: *Of Human Bondage*

Diane Blake + Stephen Smith: *The Dining Room*

Richard Rooney: *Marat/Sade*



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