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MEDIA RELEASE

SOULPEPPER 2016: THE INAUGURAL TIGER BAMBOO FESTIVAL

Toronto, ON – April 12, 2016: Albert Schultz, Founding Artistic Director of Soulpepper Theatre Company, today announced Tiger Bamboo, a free theatre festival celebrating Asian Heritage Month curated by Soulpepper Resident Artist **Ins Choi** with Associate Curators **Rong Fu** and **Miquelon Rodriguez**. Tiger Bamboo, a mix of theatrical presentations, theatrical retellings of Asian folktales, cabaret evenings and dramatic readings, takes place on May 28 and 29 at the Young Centre for the Performing Arts. Support for the Tiger Bamboo Festival is generously provided by Eleanor and Francis Shen.

“The aim of Tiger Bamboo is to provide much-needed opportunities for playwrights and performers from the Asian diaspora while giving audiences new to theatre, or new to Asian stories, free access to the work of some incredibly talented artists,” said Choi. “With the generous support of the Shen family, it is an honour to be curating this unique festival at Soulpepper.”

Theatrical presentations at the Festival include *The Tashme Project: The Living Archives* from **Matt Miwa** and **Julie Tamiko-Manning** and *Communist ‘Til Payday* by **Anand Rajaram**. Staged readings at Tiger Bamboo feature plays currently in development from some of today’s leading playwrights: *Through the Bamboo* from **Andrea Mapili** and **Byron Abalos**; *Someone Between* by **Chantria Tram**; and *Theory* by **Norman Yeung**; plus a special reading of Sarah Ruhl’s *The Oldest Boy* directed by **Courtney Ch’ng Lancaster**. Tiger Bamboo’s Cabaret performances feature a mix of music, dance, and spoken word from artists such as **Leonard Cervantes**, **Ins Choi**, **DATU**, **Shaista Latif** and **Arlene Paculan** hosted by Rong Fu and Miquelon Rodriguez. *Tales for Folks*, short, family-friendly theatre offerings based on Asian folktales, are presented by a collective of artists under the direction of **Esther Jun** with music by **Suba Sankaran**, and **Paula Wing** with music by **Deanna Choi**. Also part of the Festival, Asian theatre students currently enrolled in professional theatre training in the GTA will have access to an audition masterclass and an industry panel Q&A. Panel hosts include Soulpepper Artistic Director Albert Schultz and Baillie Fellow and Soulpepper Resident Artist **Ravi Jain**.

Tiger Bamboo events are free! For the full schedule visit Soulpepper.ca/tigerbamboo or call 416.866.8666.

Presentations

The Tashme Project: The Living Archives

Matt Miwa and Julie Tamiko-Manning

A one-act, documentary-style play painstakingly pieced together from over 70 hours of interview time with Nisei (second generation) Japanese Canadians from Vancouver, Toronto, Hamilton, Kingston, Ottawa, and Montreal, the play traces the history of the Nisei through their childhood, internment, and post-WW2 resettlement east of the Rockies. Now seniors, the Nisei were children at the time of internment and their memories of adventure and play are presented here in sharp relief to the more common internment narratives of hardship and injustice.

Recommended for adult audiences (12+). May 28 at 3 p.m. & 7:15 p.m.; May 29 at 1 p.m.

Communist ‘Til Payday

Anand Rajaram

Communist ‘Til Payday is a giant sandwich of short scenes that are part-mime, part-clown, part-song, part-audience interaction, and part-party.

Which part do you like? Do you like the part-party part? Or just part of the part-party part? Like, the part of the part-party part that is part part? Or the part of the part-party part that’s party? I bet you like the part of the part-party part that’s part party, but not the part of the part-party part that’s part part cos that part is not the part of the part-party part that’s the party part. Am I right?

Suitable for all ages. May 28 at 1 p.m. & 5:15 p.m.; May 29 at 4 p.m. & 6:15 p.m.



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Tales for Folks

Tales for Folks are short, family-friendly theatre offerings based on Asian folktales. There are two different shows to choose from: *Folktales from Mongolia and Laos* under the direction of **Esther Jun** with music by **Suba Sankaran**; and *Folktales from Nepal and Pakistan* directed by **Paula Wing** with music by **Deanna Choi**. These original theatrical creations are collectively developed by Soulpepper artists and guest artists.

Suitable for all ages.

Folktales from Mongolia and Laos: May 28 at 11:30 a.m. & 1:45 p.m.

Folktales from Nepal and Pakistan: May 28 at 12:30 p.m. & 2:45 p.m.

Tiger Bamboo Cabaret

Two evenings of music, dance, and spoken word from some of Toronto's top artists, hosted by Rong Fu and Miquelon Rodriguez. Confirmed artists include **Leonard Cervantes**, **Ins Choi**, **DATU**, **Shaista Latif** and **Arlene Paculan**.

May 28 and May 29 at 9 p.m.

Play Readings

Staged readings at Tiger Bamboo feature plays currently in development from some of today's leading playwrights and a special reading of Sarah Ruhl's *The Oldest Boy*:

Through the Bamboo

Andrea Mapili and Byron Abalos

Through the Bamboo is an ensemble quest-fantasy for young audiences exploring loss, grief and the importance of storytelling. When her Lola (grandmother) dies suddenly, a young Filipina-Canadian girl is magically transported to a fantastical world filled with characters from mythology where she finds herself an unlikely heroine. In the tradition of *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Wizard of Oz*, *Through the Bamboo* is a re-imagining of a balikbayan story (Tagalog for 'return to one's homeland') interwoven with the vibrant cultures and artistic traditions of the Philippines.

Recommended for audiences 8+. May 28 at 4:00 p.m.; May 29 at 2:30 p.m.

Someone Between

Chantria Tram

Beginning with the story of her family's escape from Cambodia, *Someone Between* chronicles the struggles of a daughter as she tries to reconcile the traditional values of her Khmer parents with her own emerging intercultural beliefs. From the challenges of childhood as a new immigrant, to the negotiation of conflicting adult roles, responsibilities and desires, the play follows this young Cambodian-Canadian woman as she realizes that she will always be "someone between."

Recommended for adult audiences (12+). May 28 and May 29 at 5:45 p.m.

Theory

Norman Yeung

When Isabelle, a young, progressive professor of film theory creates an internet discussion board for her class, a mysterious student starts posting offensive content. Amid backlash from her students and urging from her wife, Isabelle must decide on whether to take action against the online offender or stand by her anti-censorship principles, as she and her tormentor blur the lines between predator and prey.

Recommended for adult audiences (18+). May 28 and May 29 at 7:30 p.m.

The Oldest Boy

Sarah Ruhl. Directed by Courtney Ch'ng Lancaster

In Sarah Ruhl's *The Oldest Boy*, an American mother's world is shaken when she learns that Tibetan monks believe her young son is the reincarnation of a high Buddhist lama. A reading of *The Oldest Boy* presented by Sheep No Wool and The Howland Company will be made at Tiger Bamboo in support of The Tibet Fund - Earthquake Relief. Donations will be collected for The Tibet Fund. *Suitable for all ages. May 29 at 1:00 p.m.*



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Audition Masterclass & Panel Q&A

Asian theatre students currently enrolled in professional theatre training in the GTA will have access by invitation only to an audition masterclass and an industry panel Q&A. Panel hosts include Soulpepper Artistic Director Albert Schultz, and Baillie Fellow and Soulpepper Resident Artist Ravi Jain.

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Access to Tiger Bamboo is free!

Tickets for Soulpepper's 2016 mainstage productions range from \$32-\$94. \$25 tickets for Soulpepper productions are also available for arts workers, and for 21-30 year-olds at stageplay.ca. StagePlay is sponsored by TD Bank Group. The \$25 Rush Ticket / \$5 Youth Rush program is sponsored by Sun Life Financial. Ticket prices include a Young Centre facility fee, service charge and HST. Pricing is subject to change.

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, 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. Additional support for *Taking the A Train Downtown Manhattan — The Melting Pot* and *Taking the A Train Uptown Manhattan — Harlem* has been provided by Middlefield Resource Funds.

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:

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Eleanor and Francis Shen: Tiger Bamboo

Support for 2016 Soulpepper Programming is provided by:

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