

MEDIA RELEASE

WWPT 2021/2022 SEASON LAUNCH: DARING GREATLY

October 7, 2021

On October 7th, **Heather Inglis** artistic producer of WWPT announces the following in a short online teaser: Workshop West Playwrights' Theatre is proud to **announce its 43rd season, DARING GREATLY**, programming featuring stories by Canadians about Canadians. We find ourselves in exceptional times. Demanding times. Times that require us to examine ourselves, dig deep, push beyond what has become comfortable, and 'DARE GREATLY.' Workshop West's 2021-2022 Season is about taking the risks we need to take to grow and evolve.

DARING GREATLY begins with the **WORD PREMIERE of *Metronome* by Edmonton phenomenon Darrin Hagen**. This one-person storytelling show about the power of art to transform and unite us **runs Nov 11- 21st in the Backstage Theatre**. WWPT is thrilled to **relaunch the Springboards New Play Festival** which will spotlight hot new works by Edmonton playwrights in **March of 2022**. Audiences will get a sneak-beak behind the curtain at what's up-and-coming on Edmonton Stages. The **second WORLD PREMIER** of our season is ***Tell Us What Happened*** by and award-winning **newcomer to Edmonton's theatre scene, Michelle Robb**. This unforgettable winner of Alberta Playwrighting Competition's Novitiate Prize about friendship, the internet, and alliances stretched to the breaking point will hit the boards in **May of 2022**. We will close out the season with Edmonton's first public presentation of ***The Shoe Project*** which features riveting stories by women new to Canada from all over the world, told through the lens of the shoes they have worn.

Fall 2021

***Metronome* (November 11th – 21st, 2021)** The WORLD PREMIERE of an autobiographical origin-story by award-winning Edmonton playwright/performer/historian **Darrin Hagen**. It will play in the **Backstage Theatre, ATB Financial**. *Metronome* is about falling in love with music, and the very special Ennis & Sons piano which changed a young boy's life. From growing up queer in small town Alberta, through his move to the 'big city', the play follows Darrin from discovery, to inspiration, to heartbreak as he recounts the story of one of the most influential loves of his life: his piano. This brand-new, homegrown work by an Edmonton tour-de-force affirms the power of music and storytelling to unite and transform us, making it an ideal antidote to the trials of all things pandemic.

Spring 2022

***Springboards New Play Festival* (March, 2022)** Workshop West is excited to relaunch the popular *Springboards New Play Festival* this March inviting Edmonton audiences to play a vital part in the creation of Edmonton's hot up and coming works in progress. This 7-day, small-scale festival, will feature staged readings of plays in development in a welcoming cabaret setting, showcasing Edmonton's playwrights in a series of not-to-be-missed series of readings, discussions and social events which offer audiences a peek behind-the-curtain into the heart of a playwrights' creation process.

***Tell Us What Happened* (May 12th – 22nd, 2022)** WORLD PREMIERE of one of the Alberta Playwrighting Competition's Novitiate Prize winning plays in 2020, by **Michelle Robb**, a fresh young Edmonton writer new to the professional scene: Michelle Robb. *Tell Us What Happened* is a fast-paced drama about friends, the internet and how we can both know and not know the people we love. Charlie and her two roommates have been running a secret online girl group: 'Tell Us What Happened', which boasts over 400 members. Tensions rise when members realize they have all been sexually mistreated by the same young man — and Josh happens to be Charlie's best friend.

The Shoe Project (June 16th – 19th) Whether selected by choice or imposed by circumstance the shoes we wear can make or break a journey, shape our experiences, and open doors to the future. *The Shoe Project* is a national initiative that amplifies the voices of Canadian immigrant and refugee women through storytelling. This year, Workshop West brings this initiative live to Edmonton audiences. *The Shoe Project* is a very special performance event which enables women learning English to tell their stories of arrival and adaptation to Canada with coaching and mentorship from a crack team of theatre professionals.

Heather Inglis is the Artistic Producer of Workshop West Playwrights' Theatre. She is an award-winning director, producer, and dramaturg. Heather has directed and assistant directed over 40 productions, many have been new Canadian works. Heather has received Lieutenant Governor of Alberta Arts Award (2014) for her work at Theatre Yes, the Edmonton Artists' Trust Fund (twice), the Celebration of Women in the Arts Award (twice), and the Telus Courage to Innovate Award (Edmonton).

Darrin Hagen is a playwright, actor, sound designer, composer, performer, director, and TV host, based in Edmonton, Alberta since 1982. Darrin Hagen has written or co-written over forty plays, many of which deal with gay issues in an exuberant, comic style, often with flamboyant drag characters which he performs himself, and produced by the company he formed in 1987 "Guys in Disguise."

Michelle Robb is an emerging playwright based out of Edmonton, Alberta. Her play 'CITY FOLK' premiered as part of the Nextfest Festival of Emerging Artists where she directed it as a staged reading. She also acted in 'CIVIL BLOOD' at the festival, and is studying at the U of A's acting program.

QUOTES FROM HEATHER ON THE SEASON:

Why Heather chose *Metronome*: *Darrin is a master storyteller whose work is funny, truthful, and emotionally charged. As we cautiously come together again in public, I wanted to share a story that affirms the possibility and power of community connection and the importance of art in creating it. Darrin's warm-hearted story chronicling his love of music will take the chill out of your November evening.*

Why Heather chose *Springboards*: *I've known, since I started at WWPT that I wanted to bring back this wildly popular program from the 90's, it's the essence of what makes Workshop West special. We have a commitment to supporting playwrights by developing AND producing their plays. The festival will bring artists and audiences together to celebrate the creative process: the generation of innovation and new thought in our city.*

Why Heather chose *Tell Us What Happened*: *It was early the process of Michelle writing this play that I knew I wanted to produce and direct it. Michelle's characters have fresh, realistic, urgent voices in a complicated scenario where perpetrator of harm is someone they love. I think one of the roles of great theatre is to ask us to consider difficult scenarios for which there are no easy answers. This lightning-fast, smart work does just that.*

Why Heather chose *The Shoe Project* *In early 2020 I went to see an installment of The Shoe Project at the High Performance Rodeo in Calgary. It was an unforgettable experience, I was moved, and inspired, and humbled. As I sat in the audience that sunny afternoon, I knew we needed to host the project in Edmonton. Join us this year for performances of stories from both the 2021 and 2022 participants. I know you'll be talking about The Shoe Project long after you've left the theatre.*

These shows will have reduced capacity seating, and **will adhere to the most recent COVID-19 policies** and procedures for the safety and comfort of our patrons. We will also be requiring patrons to present their vaccination credentials, and wear masks.

Promotion photos will be available upon request.

For more information or to arrange interviews, contact:

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