

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – February 4, 2019

NIGHTWOOD THEATRE APPOINTS ANDREA DONALDSON AS NEW ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Nightwood Theatre's Board of Directors are thrilled to announce **Andrea Donaldson** as the new Artistic Director. With nearly 20 years of professional experience, Andrea has been a vibrant presence in Toronto's theatre scene. She has worked as a playwright, actor, and producer but most significantly she has focused her career on Directing and Artistic Direction with a strong emphasis on new play development and nurturing women's voices. Andrea will assume her new role in May 2019. Kelly Thornton will remain Artistic Director until April 30, 2019.

The Search Committee, led by Susan Hodkinson, Chair of Nightwood's Board of Directors, were pleased to review 50 applications and following a rigorous interview process were excited to share the announcement of Andrea's appointment. Hodkinson remarked, *"I am thrilled that Andrea has agreed to be our next Artistic Director. Andrea's work speaks for itself, and her creative and artistic direction will propel Nightwood to new heights. Andrea is a collaborative, purposeful and compassionate leader and the Board looks forward to supporting her in her goal to make Nightwood the company of choice for artists and staff alike."* The committee, comprised of Board members and artists, included Karon Bales, Audrey Dwyer, Diane Flacks, Sharlene Kanhai, Andrew Moodie, Barbara Moses and Caroline Ursulak.

Artistic Director Designate, Andrea Donaldson: *"Nightwood was founded with the objective of carving out a space that did not exist for Canadian female artists. I am grateful to this legacy and am devoted to extending its reach, carrying Nightwood into its vision as a world-renowned cultural centre; as the essential home for the creation of extraordinary theatre by female-identifying artists, and as Canadian theatre's most inclusive and intersectional space of empowerment and opportunity. I am committed to producing stunning works that speak to the pressing concerns of our time: reflecting the diversity of our city and our country, with the deep value that how we make something is as important as what we make."*

Managing Director Beth Brown is excited to welcome Andrea to her new role. *"I am thrilled that Andrea Donaldson will be joining us as the new Artistic Director of Nightwood Theatre. Her dedication and experience in the theatre industry is admirable and I look forward to the new perspective that she will bring to the organization. Over the past five years, I have had the pleasure of working with Andrea as the dramaturge for Write From The Hip, as well as a Director for various Nightwood productions including Lo (Or Dear Mr. Wells) by Rose Napoli and our recent production of Grace by Jane Doe. She has the talent, determination and drive and is someone who shares the values of the organization and is ready to embrace the opportunities that lie ahead."*

Outgoing Artistic Director Kelly Thornton said: *"I am delighted to welcome Andrea Donaldson to her new position. Her many years as the Program Director of Nightwood's Write From The Hip play development program, as well as her experience as Associate Artistic Director at Tarragon Theatre, give her a solid foundation to now take up this exciting leadership opportunity. I have endless admiration for her work as a director and her sure and steady hand in play development gives me great confidence in Nightwood's future. Andrea is a passionate and intelligent artist and I am inspired by her vision. It is simply thrilling to see her long-standing dedication to the company now propel her to this position. She is poised for great success."*

ABOUT ANDREA DONALDSON

Andrea was born and raised in Toronto, attending Claude Watson School for the Arts from grade four to grade thirteen, and then travelled out west to The School for Contemporary Arts at Simon Fraser University, generator of such companies as Vancouver's Boca Del Lupo and Theatre Replacement. Her years of interdisciplinary training synthesized into a practice that included devising, performing and directing new works for the stage. Upon resettling in Toronto, she found work partners in Theatre Gargantua, The Blyth Festival, Theatre Direct, and the Urge Collective, as well as a fortuitous meet-up with now long-time-collaborator Governor General Award winning playwright Erin Shields.

For the last decade, Donaldson has been almost exclusively developing and directing new works for the stage. This naturally led to a relationship with Tarragon Theatre, where in 2012, Andrea was offered the role of Assistant/Associate Artistic Director. During her four seasons at Tarragon, she directed three season shows and contributed to the development of dozens of new Canadian plays. In 2014, she took on the role of Program Director for Nightwood Theatre's *Write From the Hip* – a unit for exceptional emerging playwrights, in which she developed Rose Napoli's *Lo (or Dear Mr. Wells)* and *Grace* by Jane Doe, Nightwood's most recent production.

Donaldson's directing credits include *Grace* by Jane Doe (Nightwood Theatre in Association with Crows Theatre), Rosamund Small's *TomorrowLove* (University of Waterloo), *A Beautiful View* by Daniel MacIvor (Festival Players, Prince Edward County), Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* (St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival), Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (Shakespeare in the Ruff), Beverley Cooper's *Janet Wilson Meets the Queen* (Great Canadian Theatre Company), Caryl Churchill's *Love and Information* (RCPA), Arun Lakra's *Sequence* (Tarragon Theatre), Chelsea Woolley's *These Peaceable Kingdoms* (NTS), Erin Shields' *Soliciting Temptation* (Tarragon Theatre), Erin Shields' *Beautiful Man* (Summerworks), Deaf collective Spill Propagation's *Une Parcelle de moi...* (Espace René-Provost, Gatineau), Elena Belyea's *Cleave* (NTS), Adam Underwood's *Tyumen Then* (Toronto Fringe), and the following Dora-nominated projects: *Lo (or Dear Mr. Wells)* by Rose Napoli (Nightwood in Association with Crows Theatre), *Quiver* by Anna Chatterton (Nightwood Theatre), Anna Chatterton's Governor General nominated *Within the Glass* (Tarragon Theatre), Erin Shields' *Mistatim* (Red Sky Performance), Meagan O'Shea's *The Atomic Weight of Happiness* (Theatre Direct), Maev Beaty and Erin Shields' *Montparnasse* (Theatre Passe Muraille), Jason Long's *Offensive Fouls* (Theatre Direct), and Erin Shields' *The Unfortunate Misadventures of Masha Galinski* (National tour).

Andrea was invited into The Stratford Festival's Michael Langham Workshop in Classical Direction assisting Chris Abraham on *The Matchmaker* and *Othello*, and was honoured with Stratford's Jean Gascon Award for Direction. She won Best Director Award - International Youth Drama Month - Shenzhen, China for *Mistatim*, which has played to over 500,000 children internationally. Andrea has been nominated twice each for the Pauline McGibbon Award, the John Hirsch Directing Award and the Gina Wilkinson Award, and has received a Dora Award for Outstanding Performance & Outstanding Production for performing in the Urge Collective collaboration of *And By the Way, Miss* (Theatre Direct).

Andrea is driven to create arresting works that expose private moments in a public fashion, most often using her voice to illuminate underrepresented voices and perspectives. Her directing has been described by critics as "sensitive," "visually stunning," "hilarious," "thrilling," "whip-smart," "sublime," and "bold."

Andrea has been a regular guest director and coach at the National Theatre School of Canada, was a guest director with the 2018 Soupepper Academy, and has mentored dozens of up-and-coming artists in the city. She is married to comedian Rob Baker (Second City/*Baroness Von Sketch*/writer for CBC's *Workin' Moms*), and mother to ten-year old mathematician/pianist Theodore Fitz.