

For Immediate Release

Young People's Theatre Reimagines 2020.21

Toronto, ON, June 26, 2020 — **Young People's Theatre's (YPT)** Executive Director Nancy Webster and Artistic Director Allen MacInnis have made the difficult decision to cancel the upcoming season due to continued uncertainty around the feasibility of public gatherings and school field trips throughout 2020.21. With programming that annually attracts more than 85,000 people, the health and safety of students, families, artists, staff and volunteers continues to be of paramount importance to Canada's largest producer and presenter of theatre for young audiences.

"This has been a heart-wrenching decision to make," said Ms. Webster. "We understand the impact that this has on our audiences, artists and staff. But with students representing 70% of our audience and with a large portion of our tickets already offered at subsidized prices, it's not financially feasible to perform for a reduced audience. It is important for us however, that while YPT's stages are dark, we find avenues to serve and inspire our community."

Adds Mr. MacInnis, "As hard as it is to accept the impediments this pandemic imposes on us, we're also inspired to find new ways to adapt to this digital world. We'll continue to connect with our audiences and offer ways for artists, technicians and arts educators to keep creating."

New virtual ventures will continue to evolve, including the following initiatives:

- [Inside with Imagination](#), launched in April, offers fun drama activities for all ages.
- [Right Here, Write Now](#), a new play development platform (which premiered in May with *The Girl, Her Mum and The Raccoon With No Name* by Kevin Dyer, *Flower Girl* by Anita Majumdar, and *hey you* by Christine Quintana) will continue to develop and present new works.
- Drama School's [Summer Camps](#) have moved online for JK-Gr.12 this July and August.
- YPT will continue to partner with national and international companies and artists to share timely content from around the world, such as its recent co-hosting of the live streaming of [CARTOGRAPHY](#) with The Arts Center at NYU Abu Dhabi and UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees).
- Community programming will continue with new online workshops for children in care, family agencies and shelters, and of course, schools.
- Announcements coming soon on Drama School's fall schedule.

Earlier this spring, YPT postponed announcing its onstage 2020.21 season. The announcement would have included the unveiling of the world premiere of Canadian astronaut **Chris Hadfield's *The Darkest Dark***. Based on the internationally best-selling children's book, this ground-breaking theatrical experience will weave magic, flight, movement and multi-media with theatre arts. *The Darkest Dark* will continue in development in 2020.21 with acclaimed director/writer Jim Millan (*Kids in the Hall*, *Mythbusters*, Broadway's *The Illusionists* and *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark*), co-writer Ian MacIntyre, and magician David Ben, premiering in 2021.22.

The 2020.21 season will also see the transitioning of artistic directors, following the retirement of current Artistic Director Allen MacInnis. Due to the complexity of the search process during the pandemic, recruitment was suspended this spring and will resume in fall 2020. Mr. MacInnis will continue to see YPT through this extended transition period.

“As we consider YPT’s future, we will lean into our pledge to listen and to act on ways in which YPT can live up to its oft-spoken values of equality and diversity,” said Mr. MacInnis. “We will work to give more of our privileged space to other voices, and will keep the anti-racism discussion alive through all that we do.”

This is a particularly difficult time for charities like YPT that revolve around bringing children and their families together. As the theatre waits to open its doors once again, YPT looks to community support to ensure that its arts education programming can be as dynamic and engaging as ever. To help support YPT through this challenging time, please consider an [online donation](#).

About Young People’s Theatre

Young People’s Theatre (YPT) is North America’s oldest – and Canada’s largest – professional producer and presenter of theatre for young audiences. Over the past 55 years, YPT has staged many of the most important plays that form the canon of work for youth in our country. YPT continues to develop new work and create partnerships with theatre companies across the country and around the world. The enriched learning experiences of YPT’s Education & Participation Department provide young people with opportunities to develop their whole being. Through Drama School programs, workshops in community shelters and agencies, educational initiatives in Toronto classrooms, and training and apprenticeship opportunities, we place learning at the centre of everything we do. Visit youngpeoplestheatre.org to learn more.

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