

media release

Carol Shields Festival of New Works **MTC Joins the Festival in its Sixth Year of Showcasing New Works**

WINNIPEG April 23, 2009 – Prairie Theatre Exchange is pleased to play host to a vibrant partnership of local performing arts groups for the sixth annual **Carol Shields Festival of New Works**, May 20 -23. In addition to returning partners, PTE is happy to welcome Manitoba Theatre Centre to its first Carol Shields Festival experience.

“PTE Artistic Director Bob Metcalfe has always gone out of his way to make the Manitoba Theatre Centre feel welcome at the Carol Shields Festival. Until now, our many plays-in-development were always either too embryonic or too close to production for us to make the most of the festival’s format. With Sharon Bajer’s charming comedy Scrabble for the Apple, we are delighted to finally accept Bob’s gracious invitation”, says MTC Artistic Director, Steven Schipper.

MTC joins repeat Festival partners Manitoba Association of Playwrights (in association with Nuna(Now) for one of their plays), the RWB School-Professional Division, Sarasvati Productions, Shakespeare in the Ruins, White Rabbit Productions and the Winnipeg Film Group.

The Carol Shields Festival of New Work was created by PTE Artistic Director Robert Metcalfe to support PTE’s long-time commitment to supporting, nurturing and promoting theatre artists, both local and national. In the past five years, the Festival has given voice to 88 plays by 63 playwrights through the talents of 106 local actors. Since its inception, 8 of the plays read in the Festival have gone on to a full production, the most recent, *Bleeding Hearts* by Kevin Klassen, at MTC Warehouse (first read at the Festival in 2006). Another two will be produced in the next couple of years, and a number of commissions have been made based on Short Shots (10 minute plays specially written for the Festival).

While the staged-reading format used by the Festival is somewhat unusual for Winnipeg audiences, those who attend the performances are quickly drawn in by this unique form of theatre. Without the trappings of set and costume, the actors (who have been rehearsed and directed) are able to focus on the words and emotions of the script, generating fully-imagined performances and captivating the audience, while giving the playwright an opportunity to see how their work-in-progress connects with a live audience.

“The Festival celebrates the performing arts and the act of creation. Without the creators – the storytellers in all disciplines of the arts – our community’s stories have no voice. For three days in May, we embrace, encourage and showcase playwrights, filmmakers, choreographers, and songwriters, while giving those artists a forum to evaluate and develop their work,” says PTE Artistic Director Robert Metcalfe.

Admission to Festival events is free, with the exception of the Opening Gala (May 21), which is \$25 and includes a catered reception.

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PRAIRIE THEATRE EXCHANGE PRESENTS

the Carol Shields

FESTIVAL OF NEW WORKS

Life on Winnipeg Stages After the Festival

Coo-coosh by Doug Nepinak – Festival '04
Produced by Theatre Projects, September '05

Dogbarked by James O'Shea – Festival '04
Produced by PTE, November '05

Head by Debbie Patterson – Festival '04 & '05
Produced by SIR, October '05

Summer of My Amazing Luck by Chris Craddock – Festival '05
Produced by MTC, November '06

All Restaurant Fires are Arson by Bruce McManus – Festival '05
Produced by PTE, January '08

The Other St. Valentine's Day Massacre by Carolyn Gray – Festival '05
Produced by Theatre Projects as *The Elmwood Visitation*, February '07

Bleeding Hearts by Kevin Klassen – Festival '06
Produced by MTC Warehouse, March '09

Lucrezia Borgia by Joseph Aragon – Festival '07
Produced by Canadian Musical Theatre Development Group, Fringe Festival '07

Coming Soon – Commissions and Works Bound for Full Production

Cue for Treason by Kevin Klassen (SIR) (Festival '07 and '09)

post-democracy by Hannah Moscovitch (PTE) (Festival '07 - excerpt)

The Secret Mask by Rick Chafe (PTE) (based on a Short Shot from Festival '04)

"The Winnipeg Show" (working title) collectively written by members of the PTE Playwrights Unit, based on Short Shots written for Festival '08