

media release

PTE announces fifth straight surplus at tonight's AGM

WINNIPEG, October 20, 2008 – Prairie Theatre Exchange continues to be a financially and artistically strong theatre and will announce at tonight's Annual General Meeting, a surplus of just under \$21,000 for the 2007-2008 fiscal year. This is the fifth consecutive year that PTE has recorded a surplus and also marks the 11th time in the past 13 years that the theatre has announced a surplus.

The operating surplus is officially \$20,751. PTE had 3,566 subscribers in the 2007-08 season which featured a varied program of comedies and dramas: *Chimera*, *Tempting Providence*, *All Restaurant Fires are Arson*, *Mesa* and *Having Hope at Home*. PTE continued to program a three-day festival of new plays, dance and video with the May 2008 edition of the Carol Shields Festival of New Works.

"I'm pleased to say that PTE continues to be financially strong. The ability to run a surplus in the arts – and to do so for so many years – is a remarkable achievement. It is the result of the hard work within the theatre by our staff members and by the support of our Board of Directors, committed theatre audience and dedicated donors and corporate sponsors. We're pleased that not only do we offer extraordinary theatre but also theatre school classes for children, youth and adults," said General Manager **Cherry Karpyshin**.

The surplus will be held in reserve to maintain financial stability in future years and drawn on if necessary.

*"This past season showcased the strengths of PTE. At its core, PTE constantly strives to offer contemporary, compelling and quality entertainment. This means addressing currently salient issues with the play *Chimera* by former Winnipegger, Wendy Lill. This means giving a voice to new plays and supporting local playwrights. Bruce McManus's *All Restaurant Fires Are Arson* was a darkly funny look at life that connected with many of our patrons. Each season PTE tries to bring an outside voice to the theatre and *Tempting Providence* by Theatre Newfoundland Labrador was an example of exceptional theatre that has wowed audiences around the country and around the world. *Tempting Providence* left patrons moved by its simple and pure storytelling. *Mesa* and *Having Hope at Home* not only offered many touching and funny moments but provided a stage for local artists to continue to develop their craft. PTE maintains its commitment to being a welcoming home to local and national playwrights, actors, designers and craftspeople,"* says Artistic Direct, **Robert Metcalfe**.

In 2007-2008, PTE honoured the longtime commitment of one of the founders of Prairie Theatre Exchange with a dinner in November. More than \$73,000 was raised in recognition of The Honourable Charles R. Huband's work at PTE and a total of \$111,628 was added to the PTE Foundation Trust – recipient of the donations – once matching

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funds were received from the Federal Government's Endowment Incentive Component of the Canadian Arts and Heritage Program. The PTE Foundation Trust is an endowment fund that supports the ongoing work for the theatre.

"One of the key strengths at PTE, is our staff. This past year we had three staff members with 25 years of service. Cherry Karpyshin (General Manager), Anne Bodin (Administrative Assistant) and Peter Harrison (Technical Director) have helped to make PTE the success it is. And Cherry was recognized by the national theatre community for her contributions with the Mallory Gilbert Leadership Award," says Metcalfe.

PTE reaches well beyond the Mainstage theatre at Portage Place with the annual tour of Robert Munsch tales for youth and families. This past year, *Munsch Ado About Nothing*, played to packed houses (96%) here, and then went on tour around the province. A total of 95 performances were given reaching approximately 25,175 children and adults.

The 2007-2008 season marked the second full year for the PTE School under the direction of **John B. Lowe**. Programming continued to evolve to offer courses for children, youth and adults that challenged their creativity and built on personal skills that are as useful in their daily lives and on stage.

Prairie Theatre Exchange's operations continue to have a very positive impact on the community. More than 60% of the theatre's \$1.8 million budget is invested in salaries and fees. Approximately 85% of the artists, teachers, designers, craftspeople and other employees live in Winnipeg, and 90% of the theatre's expense budget was reinvested back into City of Winnipeg citizens and businesses.

In addition, PTE is a busy rental venue for events like the Winnipeg Fringe Festival, The Winnipeg International Film Festival, FemFest, Manitoba Drama Educator's High School Drama Festival and Freeze Frame, among many others, and for companies like Investors Group, Manitoba Health and APTN. Shakespeare in the Ruins, Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, Patient Puppets and Horizons Adult Learning Centre all make their permanent home with PTE. During the season, over 67 companies and organizations rent PTE's theatres and studios, occupying over 500 days of usage, in addition to PTE's own performance and school activities.

Prairie Theatre Exchange opened its 36th season on Thursday, October 16 with Daniel MacIvor's new play *How It Works* and all reviews confirm that it works well. Four- and three-play flexible subscriptions will be available until January by calling the PTE Box Office at 942-5483.

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