

## CASTING ANNOUNCED FOR HEART OF ROBIN HOOD

**WINNIPEG, October 9, 2014** - The Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre in co-production with **David Mirvish**, and by arrangement with **Barry and Fran Weissler**, are thrilled to announce the cast of the Canadian premiere production of **THE HEART OF ROBIN HOOD** by **David Farr**, directed by **Gisli Örn Gardarsson**.

**THE HEART OF ROBIN HOOD** begins performances in Winnipeg at the John Hirsch Mainstage November 13 and runs through December 6. Following the Winnipeg run, the Toronto performances begin at the Royal Alexandra Theatre December 23 and run through March 1, 2015.

### THE CAST

Tony Award-winning American actor and singer **Gabriel Ebert** will star as the legendary hero Robin Hood. Gabriel starred in Harvey Fierstein's *Casa Valentina* on Broadway this past spring. Gabriel is best known for originating the role of Harry Wormwood in the Broadway production of *Matilda the Musical*, for which he won the 2013 Tony Award-winner for Best Featured Actor in a Musical. He won the OBIE for his performance in Amy Herzog's *4000 Miles* in 2012.

Theatre, television and film actress **Izzie Steele** will star as Marion. Izzie has performed in many of the Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey's productions including: *Playboy of the Western World*, *Henry V Part 1*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Taming of the Shrew* and *Romeo and Juliet*. Film: *Stockholm*, *The Letter*.

Scottish actor **Euan Morton** will star as Prince John. Euan is known for his celebrated Olivier/Tony & Drama Desk nominated performance as Boy George in *Taboo* (2002 West End & 2004 Broadway productions). Broadway: *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Sondheim on Sondheim*. Off-Broadway: *Measure for Pleasure* (Public Theatre, Obie Award), Tony Kushner's *Brundibar* (New Victory) and *Howard Katz* (Roundabout).

Toronto-based **Christian Lloyd** will star as Pierre. Christian has starred in many local productions including: *Chicken Grease is Nasty Business* (2014 Summerworks), *Amadeus* (CanStage/Citadel/Naples), *Twelfth Night* (Soulpepper), *Platonov* (Soulpepper) and *Romeo and Juliet* (Canstage).

Rounding out the cast are **Anna Bartlam, Richard Clarkin, Jeremy Crawford, Zachary Eisenstat, Paul Essiembre, Amariah Faulkner, Troy Feldman, Jason Gosbee, Martin Julien, Tristan Mackid, Katelyn McCulloch, Meguire McRae-King, Carson Reaume, Sarah Schenkkan, Stephen Michael Spencer, Darcy Stewart** and **Tate Yap**.

Essential to **THE HEART OF ROBIN HOOD** are **Parsonsfield**, a new bluegrass and roots band that has already received great acclaim from such prestigious sources as The New York Times. The band members, **Chris Freeman, Antonio Alcorn, Max Shakun, Harrison Goodale** and **Erik Hischmann**, will be integral to the telling and staging of the story, providing songs written specifically for the show.

## ABOUT THE PLAY

Every legendary hero has to start somewhere. In **THE HEART OF ROBIN HOOD**, playwright David Farr presents a wildly imaginative, theatrically dazzling new spin on the familiar fable.

First, forget everything you ever knew about Robin Hood. In this reimagining, Robin (**Gabriel Ebert**) and his unmerry gang of cutthroats steal from the rich, but it's never occurred to them to give anything back to anyone. But when wicked Prince John (**Euan Morton**) threatens all, bold Marion (**Izzie Steele**) steps in to protect the poor and transform a thuggish Robin from hood to good.

First staged at the Royal Shakespeare Company in 2011 and at American Repertory Theatre (A.R.T.) in Cambridge, MA., in 2013, critics have cheered the eye-popping, athletic and endlessly inventive production from acclaimed director **Gisli Örn Gardarsson**, which explodes off the stage to take place in front, above and on all sides of the audience. The production features swashbuckling, acrobatics, comedy, drama, cross-dressing, trap doors, aerial work and original music played by on-stage musicians, the acclaimed Connecticut-based roots band, **Parsonsfield**.

**THE HEART OF ROBIN HOOD** is written by **David Farr**, music and lyrics by **Parsonsfield**, scenic design by **Börkur Jónsson**, costume design by **Emma Ryott**, lighting design by **Björn Helgason**, sound design by **Jonathan Deans and Garth Helm**, creative consultant **Walter Bobbie**, associate direction/choreography by **Selma Björnsdóttir** and direction by **Gisli Örn Gardarsson**.

## ABOUT THE CREATIVE TEAM

### David Farr - Playwright

David is currently directing his first feature film, *The Ones Below* for BBC Films and BFI. He is also currently adapting John Le Carre's *The Night Manager* for BBC television. Other plays as writer: *The Heart of Robin Hood* and *Night of the Soul* (RSC); *The UN Inspector* (National Theatre); *The Nativity* (Young Vic Theatre); *Elton John's Glasses* (London West End) and *The Danny Crowe Show* (Bush Theatre). Directing credits: *Hamlet*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Tempest*, *A Winter's Tale*, *King Lear*, *The Homecoming* (Royal Shakespeare Company); *Coriolanus* (RSC/Old Vic Theatre); *Julius Caesar* (RSC/Lyric Theatre Hammersmith); adapted and directed *The Odyssey*, directed the devised piece *Water* (with Filter Theatre) and *The Birthday Party* (Lyric Theatre Hammersmith). Other credits: Associate director, Royal Shakespeare Company (2009-present); artistic director of the Gate Theatre, London 1993-97; artistic director of Bristol Old Vic 2002-05; artistic director and co-chief executive of Lyric Theatre Hammersmith 2005-09. Film and television writing credits: *Spooks* (BBC-TV series) and *Hanna* (co-writer, feature film, Focus Features). David is currently writing screenplays for BBC Film, Cloud Eight, Universal Studios and Parkes Macdonald.

### Gisli Örn Gardarsson - Director

Born in Iceland and raised in Norway, Gísli Örn Garðarsson attended the Icelandic Academy of the Arts, where, in his last year (2001), he co-founded Vesturport Theatre. Garðarsson made his debut as a director with his circus-inspired version of *Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet*, also playing the role of Romeo, which premiered at the Reykjavik City Theatre in November 2002, and has been performed in London at the Young Vic Theatre (2003) and in the West End (2004). He directed and adapted *Georg Büchner's Woyzeck*, with an original score and lyrics by Nick Cave and Warren Ellis, which opened at the Barbican Theatre in London (October 2005). He directed and adapted *Metamorphosis*, along with David Farr, at the Lyric Hammersmith in London, appearing in the role of Gregor Samsa, and with music by Nick Cave and Warren Ellis. He has also written and directed *Love*, a romantic musical about two people who find love at the end of their lives. Garðarsson

directed *The Heart of Robin Hood*, which opened at the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford (2011), and *Bastard*, co-written by Richard LaGravenese, presented in Denmark, Sweden and Iceland (2012). Other acting credits include *A Matter of Life and Death* (National Theatre London), an adaptation of the 1946 Powell and Pressburger film, *Angela Carter's Nights at the Circus*, and the title role in *Don John* (Royal Shakespeare Company), all directed by Emma Rice. Gardarsson starred in and co-wrote the film *Children*, for which he received a Shooting Star Award at the 2007 Berlinale, and played the main villain in the Disney/Bruckheimerfilm *Prince of Persia*, directed by Mike Newell. He has also worked at the National Theatre in Norway, the Malmö City Theatre in Sweden, the Residenz Theatre in Munich, and elsewhere.

### **Parsonsfield**

Parsonsfield (previously known as Poor Old Shine) is a roots band with a grassroots ethos. The Connecticut band prizes the human element that underpins their music, from songwriting to recording to album design. Formed at the University of Connecticut, where singer and banjo player **Chris Freeman** met banjo and mandolin player **Antonio Alcorn** in a folk music club on campus, an early version of **Parsonsfield** landed its first gig – opening for a friend's band at the legendary New Haven club Toad's Place – before the musicians had even decided what to call themselves. With the addition of **Max Shakun** on guitar and pump organ, **Harrison Goodaleon** on bass, and **Erik Hischmann** on drums, **Parsonsfield's** music is rooted in the folk and Appalachian mountain music tradition and each set mixes the band's original songwriting with traditional folk ballads, prison work songs, and front porch style jamming.

**Parsonsfield** has played live shows in renowned venues, including the Kennedy Center for the Arts in Washington D.C., Club Passim in Cambridge, Rockwood Music Hall in New York, and Infinity Hall in Norfolk, CT. They travel with an assortment of instruments including guitars, banjos, pump organ, mandolin, string bass, musical saw, washboard and a yard-sale-scrap-metal drum set. **Parsonsfield** has released a self-titled debut studio LP on Signature Sounds.

Tickets for **THE HEART OF ROBIN HOOD** start at \$25 plus GST. For showtimes and ticket information, call the Royal MTC Box Office at 204 942 6537, toll-free at 1 877 446 4500 or visit [www.royalmtc.ca](http://www.royalmtc.ca). Are you 25 and under? A limited number of \$15 tickets are available at noon on the day of the performance, unless the performance is sold out. For more information, visit [www.royalmtca.ca/rush](http://www.royalmtca.ca/rush).

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### **For more information, please contact:**

Hayley Brigg, Publicist  
Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre  
204 934 0302 | [hbrigg@royalmtc.ca](mailto:hbrigg@royalmtc.ca) | [www.royalmtc.ca](http://www.royalmtc.ca)