

## **ROYAL MTC APPOINTS KELLY THORNTON AS NEW ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**

**Winnipeg, MB – October 3, 2018** – Royal MTC’s Board of Directors are thrilled to announce Kelly Thornton as the new Artistic Director. With more than 25 years of professional theatre experience, including 17 years leading Nightwood Theatre in Toronto, Kelly will bring her artistic leadership to Royal MTC. Kelly will move to Winnipeg with her family and assume her new role in June 2019. Steven Schipper will remain Artistic Director until May 31, 2019.

Tony Fletcher, Chair of the Search Committee: *“With Steven’s retirement long-planned for May 2019, Royal MTC’s Board of Trustees wanted to be sure that our search process would be thorough, positive and a reflection of the needs of the theatre and all who support it. We set out to be rigorous in finding the best possible person to succeed Steven – no easy task at all – but I firmly believe we have achieved that goal. Kelly is a collaborative, creative force with a deep appreciation for Royal MTC’s scope of programming, and a history of inclusion, mentorship and excellence. We have every confidence that Kelly will bring a wealth of experience to our theatre and community.”*

Artistic Director Designate, Kelly Thornton: *“I am so very honoured to join Royal MTC and to build upon Steven’s powerful legacy. As Canada’s oldest regional theatre, Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre is deeply symbolic not only as a national institution but as a local treasure. Winnipeg is a beautiful city with a dedicated and intelligent audience base and a community of talented local artists, many of whom are my peers. As the leader of the largest theatrical institution in the province, I will be committed to creating a deep bond with the many stakeholders of Royal MTC, to nurture the talent, seed the next generation, and cultivate a personal and lasting relationship with the artists, audience and donors of the theatre. I look forward to setting the course for the future of Royal MTC, and to bringing powerful and representative programming to our stage. I am thrilled to join Camilla, and the amazing Staff and Board in this immensely exciting position.”*

Dave Christie, Chair, Board of Trustees: *“On behalf of the Board of Trustees, we couldn’t be more thrilled to have Kelly assume the role of Artistic Director in June 2019. Our goal was to find a dynamic and energetic artistic leader who understood the vision and mission of Royal MTC and wanted to build on our success. Kelly has proven with her 17-year commitment to Nightwood Theatre that she has a passion for expanding the reach of a vibrant theatre organization, and we look forward to welcoming her, and her family to Winnipeg.”*

*“I’ve long admired Kelly’s dynamic leadership as Artistic Director of Nightwood Theatre. I know she will honour Royal MTC’s essential values of quality and balance, while charting a bright new course for the future. I look forward to a smooth transition, and to introducing her to the artists, audience members, and stakeholders who have made my tenure such a joy,”* stated Steven Schipper, Artistic Director.

Executive Director Camilla Holland is excited to welcome Kelly to her new role. *“Kelly and I started our professional careers in Toronto around the same time, and I have always been in awe of her talent, determination and drive. In her championing of new plays at Nightwood, Kelly has been a voice of empowerment. I know she has the skills, sensitivity and smarts to lead this theatre. After my good fortune of working alongside Steven for eight years, I look forward to partnering with Kelly, and helping ensure that Royal MTC, and indeed Manitoba, embraces her in her new role.”*

## About Kelly Thornton

Kelly Thornton has been the Artistic Director of Nightwood Theatre in Toronto since 2001. Kelly's work has received wide acclaim and toured nationally and internationally. As an award-winning director and dramaturg, her work has been recognized for artistic excellence, advocacy and the mentorship of emerging talent. As a senior arts manager, her vision, outstanding leadership and forward-thinking artistic voice continues to make an impact on Canadian Theatre and beyond.

Kelly has directed on stages across Canada including the National Arts Centre, Canadian Stage, Yukon Arts Centre, Globe Theatre, Theatre Passe Muraille, Buddies in Bad Times, Grand Theatre, as well as the Magnetic North Theatre Festival. As a director, she has been honoured with a Pauline McGibbon Award, was twice nominated for the Siminovitch Prize in Theatre, has received multiple Dora Mavor Moore Award nominations as well as a Harold Award. In recognizing her commitment to the training and mentorship of young women in the performing arts Kelly was awarded a YWCA Women of Distinction (Arts & Letters).

Her directing credits at Nightwood Theatre include: *Unholy*, *Refuge*, *Free Outgoing*, *The Penelopiad*, *Between the Sheets*, *The Happy Woman*; as well as *The List*, *That Face*, and *Wild Dogs* (all in association with Canadian Stage); *The Danish Play* (Aveny-Teatret, Copenhagen; Magnetic North Theatre Festival; National Arts Centre), *Bear With Me* (Magnetic North), *Finding Regina*, *Mathilde*, and *China Doll*. Other select credits include *Vigil* (TIFT), *The Comedy of Errors* (Canadian Stage); *This Hotel* (Theatre Passe Muraille) and nine seasons of Nightwood's Lawyer Show, staging Shakespeare's comedies and Broadway musicals.

Kelly's legacy at Nightwood is one of significant growth and prosperity matched with bold, inclusive and socially impactful programming. She has been a tireless advocate for gender equity in the arts, partnering with the Playwrights Guild of Canada and the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres to launch significant initiatives designed to promote more women into leadership roles in the arts.

Royal MTC's Search Committee was comprised of Board of Trustee members Dave Christie, Tony Fletcher (Chair, Search Committee), Derek Rolstone, Laurie Speers, Helga Van Iderstine and Richard Yaffe, and community members Christopher Brauer, Kerry Dangerfield and Claudette Leclerc. The Search Committee worked in partnership with Daniel Weinzweig, John McQuaker and Olivia Li from Searchlight Recruitment Inc. (Toronto).

A selection of photos will be available for download on October 3 at 2:45 CST. To access these photos, visit the MEDIA CENTRE at [royalmtc.ca/mediacentre](http://royalmtc.ca/mediacentre). USERNAME: media PASSWORD: images

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