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GHOST RIVER FOUNDER AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR DOUG CURTIS STEPS DOWN AS HEALTH CHALLENGES CONTINUE

Former Artistic Producer Jason Rothery to step in as new Artistic Director

CALGARY – After 10 years at the helm of Ghost River Theatre, award-winning writer, director, producer and performer Doug Curtis is stepping down as the company's Artistic Director due to his declining health.

Curtis, who founded Ghost River Theatre in 1999, has been battling Parkinson's Disease for a number of years and recently advised the theatre's Board of Directors that his worsening condition made it impossible for him to continue in his role as Artistic Director.

While Curtis is stepping away from the day-to-day responsibility of managing and directing Ghost River Theatre, he plans to continue to write and contribute creatively to Ghost River and the Calgary theatre scene.

Jason Rothery, former Artistic Producer at Ghost River, will assume the role of Artistic Director. A Calgary-based writer, dramaturge, producer and administrator, Rothery joined Ghost River in late 2006 and has collaborated with Curtis and the theatre's Board of Directors during the last year to ensure a seamless transition and refine a long-term creative vision for the theatre.

"The Board of Directors of Ghost River Theatre accepted Doug's decision to step down with more than a little regret, but with deep understanding and respect for the nature and difficulty of the challenges he's facing. We have worked closely with Doug and Jason over the last year in anticipation of a transition and have no doubt that Ghost River – and its audiences – will continue to be well-served by both Jason and Doug in their new roles," said Dale Turri, President of Ghost River Theatre.

This year, Curtis and Rothery introduced an ambitious season. As the only professional theatre company in Calgary that produces exclusively new work, Ghost River premiered *Iraq & Back*, *My Autopsy*, *DOOM 2012: When Will YOU Flee?* and the sensational preview presentation of *NiX* (a co-production between Ghost River, Alberta Theatre Projects and Vancouver's The Only Animal). The company's 07/08 season concludes with two upcoming shows – *Politiko*, written by Rothery, and a reprise of *The Alan Parkinson's Project*, directed by Heather Moore and based on a rewritten script by Curtis.

Over 10 seasons at Ghost River, Curtis created a number of award-winning and controversial shows, locally and internationally. His credits, both solo and in collaboration, include:

- *An Eye for an Eye*, about Wiebo Ludwig, the RCMP, and the oil and gas industry, winner of the 2001 Betty Mitchell Award for Outstanding Musical. *An Eye for an Eye* also played at Theatre Network (Edmonton) and the National Arts Centre (Ottawa), and was adapted as a radio drama for the CBC.
- *The Alan Parkinson's Project* and *X-Ray*, collaborative efforts presented in Calgary.
- *Confessions of a Paperboy* and *While My Mother Lay Dreaming*, both written by Curtis.
- *The Photo Double* (One Yellow Rabbit/Ghost River) and *The Carrot Warrior Seminar* (Halifax, Edmonton, Calgary), in which Curtis contributed as a writer and performer.
- *Mesa*, an original script by Curtis, which has captured the imagination of theatre audiences across Canada. Recent productions include Prairie Theatre Exchange (Winnipeg), Sunshine Theatre (Kelowna), Presentation House (North Vancouver), a sold-out run at the Belfry Theatre (Victoria), and a four-week tour of the United Kingdom. Further productions are slated for The Arts Club (Vancouver), The Globe (Regina), and Theatre Orangeville.

In addition to those credits, Curtis and his Ghost River collaborators created programs such as "Performance Storytelling" and "Writing on Your Feet" to help high school students and emerging performers discover their voice.

A Calgary-based playwright, graphic designer and producer, Rothery is the author of *Wedgie*; *Wilson's Leg*; *the space between us*; *The Drop*; *Re:Generation*; and the Centaur Showcase Award-winning *Menace*. Rothery has worked with theatre organizations across Canada including Playwrights Theatre Centre, Upintheair, THEATREboom, Invisible Elephant, and Alberta Playwrights Network. Jason was the creator and co-producer of the Vancouver-based Walking Fish Festival, and was the co-founder and Festival Director of the 2006 Calgary Fringe Festival. In addition to his broadened role at Ghost River, Jason also serves as an Artistic Associate with Urban Curvz, and is the Head of Development for Rocket Ace Moving Pictures.

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