

For Immediate Release
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SAINT JOHN THEATRE COMPANY

A Regional Spin on a Timeless Tragedy!

Saint John Theatre Company plans a modern-day Romeo & Juliet set in New Brunswick.

SAINT JOHN – What do you get when you have two feuding families engaged in a heated language battle? *Romeo & Juliet* – New Brunswick style! Saint John Theatre Company (SJTC) is getting geared up to tackle a larger than life rendition of the classic Shakespearean tale. The modern day version will be set in New Brunswick; presenting the two feuding families as being Anglophone and Francophone.

Cast has been selected and rehearsals are underway for the May production. Several Francophone performers have been cast and portions of the play have been translated into French. Collaboration with staff at Centre scolaire Samuel-de-Champlain has allowed SJTC to receive help with translation as well as various cultural nuances that add authenticity to the production.

“Romeo and Juliet will already be familiar to most Saint John theatre-goers, but I think that audiences will find that experiencing the play in two languages will help to underline the drama of the situation, and make the tragic conflict between the Capulets and the Montagues seem all the more relevant to people living in New Brunswick,” notes Bill Duncan, a teacher at Centre scolaire Samuel-de-Champlain, who has been instrumental in providing translation and perspective throughout the development of the show. *“Using language to draw distinctions between the feuding families will challenge the audience to take a harder look at their own attitudes towards French and English, and the way that they come together in the province of New Brunswick, and particularly here in city.”*

The May production of *Romeo & Juliet* will mark the end of the company’s 2011-2012 Main Stage season. Director Stephen Tobias plans to wrap up the successful Season with a passionate production that will wow audiences with modern design, intense fight choreography and a gripping musical score. *“I’ve always been a fan of Shakespeare that speaks to modern audiences. The real tradition of Shakespearean production, at any time in the 17th to the 21st century, has been to treat the plays as if they were modern – to conceptualize, design and even adapt the scripts so as to speak to the audience of the day. It is a tribute to the power of these amazing scripts that they have been able to be used in this way to convey messages that are truly timeless in nature,”*notes Stephen Tobias, Director.

Thanks to recent funding from TELUS and the Strategic Initiatives Fund from the Arts Development Branch of the Department of Culture, Tourism and Healthy Living, SJTC is able to offer cast members a rare training opportunity with Toronto based Soupepper Theatre’s Artistic

Director Albert Schultz and Movement Coach Kelly McEvenue as well as acclaimed fight director Jean-Francois Gagnon from the National Theatre School of Canada. As an added bonus Jeremy Webb, Halifax based actor, director and producer, will host a Shakespeare in Performance intensive workshop for the cast in mid April. *“I’m excited that the support of TELUS and the Province of New Brunswick is allowing us to create this one-of-a-kind training opportunity for the members of the Romeo & Juliet cast. Credible performing arts training in theatre is a real missing link in our market, and the Saint John Theatre Company has been proud to take the lead on this. Albert, Kelly, Jean-Francois and Jeremy are all going to infuse our talent base with new techniques and ideas. This will help to develop their skills as theatre practitioners as well as allowing the theatre company to pursue ever more sophisticated works with a more developed talent base,”* adds Tobias.

Saint John Theatre Company was established over 20 years ago and has grown into a premier provider of English-language theatre in New Brunswick. The company strives to produce quality live entertainment and training for audiences and theatre practitioners throughout southern New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Maine.

Romeo & Juliet is one of 4 productions in the 2011-2012 SJTC Main Stage Season and will play at Imperial Theatre May 17-19, 2012. Tickets are available at Imperial Theatre box office by calling 674-4100.

For more information please contact:

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