

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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A Year of Growth & Change

Saint John Theatre Company's (SJTC) 2014-2015 AGM wraps up the season with a popular family classic, a summer theatre festival, a budding Studio line-up and a 25th birthday celebration!

SAINT JOHN – At the 2015 Annual General Meeting, Dean Turner, President of the SJTC Board of Directors, presented a re-cap of the company's activities, Treasurer Robert Crowley presented a financial report for the fiscal year, while Artistic Director Stephen Tobias focused on upcoming projects. The meeting was held at the company's home on 112 Princess Street on December 16th, 2015.

The 2014-2015 season was a success with three Main Stage productions including *The Sound of Music*, *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour*, and *The Great Gatsby*. All three shows were a hit with audiences and a success in box office sales. *The Sound of Music*, being the second largest selling Main Stage show in SJTC history, *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* marked a first touring production that played to audiences in Saint John, Moncton, Fredericton and Edmundston and the wildly popular *The Great Gatsby*, a Classics for the Classroom production, treated audiences to an elaborate showcase of jazz age costumes, music and dance.

The BMO Studio Theatre was a buzz with three in house Studio Series pieces and four professional touring works brought into the intimate venue as part of the Canadian Stages series. Two amazing stories were offered as part of the Studio Series: Stephen Massicotte's wartime love story - *Mary's Wedding* played to sold-out houses, and Harold Pinter's *Betrayal*. A showcase of original one-act plays from Maritime playwrights was also part of the Studio Series. Script Happens, a development wing of the SJTC, is an annual playwright contest that transforms original works from page to stage with the assistance of a professional dramaturge.

The Canadian Stages (Presentation) Series presented professional works from New Brunswick and beyond, the line-up included: *Under Milkwood* by Off The Leash Creative – Halifax, *Mary: Beyond The Asylum* by Red Necklace Productions – Moncton, *Somme Letters Home* by Theatre New Brunswick – Fredericton, and *UnSex'd* by Theatre OUTre – Lethbridge, Alberta. Audiences enjoyed the variety these series offered.

A special student outreach project was added to the line-up last season as part of the company's new Theatre on the Road (SJTC ToR) initiative. Project 937, a powerful play based on the Jewish refugee voyage along the Atlantic coast in 1939, was performed by NS based Two Planks and a Passion Theatre. This piece was added to the line-up because of its powerful story and relevant message. *"937 was a great fit for this series. It's a story we wanted to help share because of its historical relevance, it is a piece that people need to take*

in and reflect upon,” adds SJTC Artistic Director, Stephen Tobias. The SJTC partnered with the Saint John Jewish Historical Museum, UNBSJ and the Anglophone South School District (ASD) to ensure that the piece was accessible to students and to develop relevant student collateral including study guides, pre-show teaching aids, and post show discussions. 937 toured to several schools throughout New Brunswick free of charge.

August saw the re-launch of the ever-popular Fundy Fringe Festival under the leadership of Festival Director Sarah Rankin. This past summer the festival grew to 20 shows offering audiences a larger variety of edgy, out of the box theatre. Plans are already underway to continue the festival next year. *“Fringe theatre taps us into a bigger world of unique works presented by theatre makers from across the world,”* notes Stephen Tobias.

The SJTC 2015-2016 season now is in full swing with 3 music acts, 3 touring productions, a 25th birthday celebration, a locally inspired wartime story, and a larger than life Main Stage production in its cap all before the snow flies! There is still a lot more to come this season at the SJTC!

Two long-standing members of the SJTC Board of Directors will not be returning: John Elliot and Richard Gradon. The SJTC would like to thank John and Richard for their valuable contribution to the SJTC over the years. New Board Members: Elizabeth Cormier, Scott Brittain, and Dayna Van Doleweerd.

The evening concluded with recognition of key contributors to the SJTC. Stephen Tobias acknowledged BMO Financial Group for its role as a major patron in all SJTC activities, Canaport LNG for its continued support of the SJTC Main Stage Series, and TD Canada Trust for its support of SJTC youth outreach and various education initiatives.

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