



For Immediate Release

World Premiere of *We Are the Body* produced by Calgary's *Burnt Thicket* runs at Pumphouse Theatre May 13-23
New Canadian play is a psychologically thrilling drama written, directed and produced by University of Calgary alumni Andrew Kooman, Stephen Waldschmidt and James Popoff.

Calgary, Alberta (April 28, 2015)—The highly anticipated new play by University of Calgary alumnus Andrew Kooman will be in Calgary May 13-23 at the Pumphouse's Joyce Doolittle Theatre as part of its World Premiere tour. *We Are the Body* is a psychologically thrilling drama that explores the lives of three prisoners of conscience in Communist Europe in the 1950s.

"Calgarians have really embraced my work and I'm excited to offer audiences another compelling night of live theatre," says the award winning playwright of *She Has A Name* which received critical acclaim both when it premiered in 2011 and toured Canada in 2012, frequently playing to sold out audiences.



(l-r) University of Calgary alumni Andrew Kooman, Playwright; Stephen Waldschmidt, Director and James Popoff, Artistic Director.

Imprisoned in solitary confinement behind the Iron Curtain of post-war Romania, Elsie's (**Heather Pattengale**) only companions are two other tortured prisoners Richard (**Tim Bratton**) and Micah (**John McIver**) whom she cannot touch, speak to or see in person. Both Pattengale and McIver are Calgary-area actors. In 2013, Pattengale was nominated by the Calgary Theatre Critics' Awards for best solo performance in *Badger* by Theatre BSMT.

From the confines of their lonely cells, as they await their nearly daily punishment, Elsie, Richard and Micah secretly tap out messages to each other in Morse Code. These sounds trigger memories from their lives before the war so that the past and present collide in a heart-wrenching and occasionally humorous way.

"The characters in *We Are the Body*, though they remain confined in subterranean cells, go on a spectacular journey. Traveling in and out of time, they are caught somewhere between the terrible facts of their imprisonment and the beautiful memories of better times as they are pushed through their suffering towards the truth of who they are and what they ultimately believe," comments Kooman.

As the narrative throttles toward its shocking conclusion, the forbidden communication among Elsie, Richard and Micah becomes a survival strategy as they cling to the faint hope of escape or release.

We Are the Body is based on real events from the recent past. The decisions the characters must make and the realities they face are devastatingly relevant,” says Stephen Waldschmidt the play’s director and a U of C alumnus, who was struck by the subject matter of Kooman’s newest play. Waldschmidt also directed ***She Has A Name***.

For Elsie, Richard and Micah, the choice presented to them by their captors is to turn in their friends, give up names and betray people they love in order to end their very real and terribly visceral suffering. But in order to enjoy a future of freedom—without torture—they must imagine a life without their very personal faith.

Committed to the creation of new works of Canadian theatre, Calgary-based **Burnt Thicket Theatre** has brought new plays to audiences across Canada since 2007. “Audiences in Calgary have been incredibly supportive of our work and we’re thrilled to bring this timely and powerful new Canadian play to Calgary by producing **We Are the Body**,” says Waldschmidt.



(l-r) John McIver (Micah), Heather Pattengale (Elsie) and Richard (Tim Bratton)

We Are the Body, a play by Andrew Kooman
2015 World Premiere Tour May 5 - 31

RED DEER May 5 – 9 - Scott Block Theatre
CALGARY May 13 – 23 - Pumhouse Theatre (Joyce Doolittle Theatre)
SASKATOON May 26 – 31 - Studio 914 Theatre

Performances are 7:30 PM nightly with 2:00 PM Matinees.
TICKETS on sale for \$25 in advance and \$30 at the door.
Tickets are also available online at www.burntthicket.com



We Are The Body rehearsal photos (photo credit: Janalee Cowan)

Cast + Creative Team

Heather Pattengale – ELSIE
Tim Bratton – RICHARD / IONEL
John McIver – MICAH / PETRE

Andrew Kooman* – PLAYWRIGHT
Stephen Waldschmidt – DIRECTOR / SCENIC DESIGNER & ARTIST
James Popoff – ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
Karl Sine** – FIGHT DIRECTOR
Colin Lowe – TECHNICAL DIRECTOR / PRODUCTION MANAGER
Victoria Krawchuk – COSTUME DESIGNER
Becky Halterman – LIGHTING DESIGNER
Paul Zacharias – COMPOSER / SOUND DESIGNER
Haley Mailandt – PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER
Jillian Borrowman – REHEARSAL STAGE MANAGER
Alida Lowe – PRODUCING DIRECTOR

*Member of the Playwrights Guild of Canada

**Appears courtesy of Canadian Actors' Equity Association

About Burnt Thicket Theatre



Burnt Thicket Theatre has been telling enlivening stories since 2007. Past productions have included HOCKEY DAD: A PLAY IN 3 PERIODS, TWINKLE, SOLO JOE and the cross Canada tour of SHE HAS A NAME. Committed to the creation of new theatre work, Burnt Thicket Theatre strives to lead artists and audiences to live more engaged lives. www.burntthicket.com @BurntThicket

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For more information, interviews or hi-rez photos, please contact:

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