



For Immediate Release

Burnt Thicket Theatre presents World Premiere of *We Are the Body* by Andrew Kooman

Month long tour includes Red Deer (May 5 – 9), Calgary (May 13 – 23) & Saskatoon (May 26 – 31)

[Click here to view video trailer of We Are The Body](#)

Calgary, Alberta (March 16, 2015) – New from award winning playwright Andrew Kooman (*who created **She Has A Name***) is ***We Are the Body***, a psychologically thrilling drama that explores the lives of three prisoners of conscience in Communist Europe in the 1950s.

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) who she cannot touch, speak to or see in person.

The World Premiere of ***We Are the Body*** in Red Deer, Calgary and Saskatoon this May, brings the author of the critically acclaimed play ***She Has A Name*** (which toured Canada in 2012 and was recently optioned as a feature film), back into creative collaboration with Calgary's **Burnt Thicket Theatre**.

The play opens in three cities from **May 5 - 31, 2015** with performances in Red Deer and Calgary, Alberta and Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

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

"This is a story of high stakes as the characters come to terms with their confinement and wrestle with how they became imprisoned in the first place: for defying a brutal government regime," says Stephen Waldschmidt the play's director, who was struck by the subject matter of Kooman's newest play. Waldschmidt also directed ***She Has A Name***.



Stephen Waldschmidt, Director, *We Are The Body*

“I believe the play will resonate deeply with audiences, especially given the daily headlines about people globally who are facing extreme brutality because they belong to a specific faith or adhere to a marginalized worldview.”

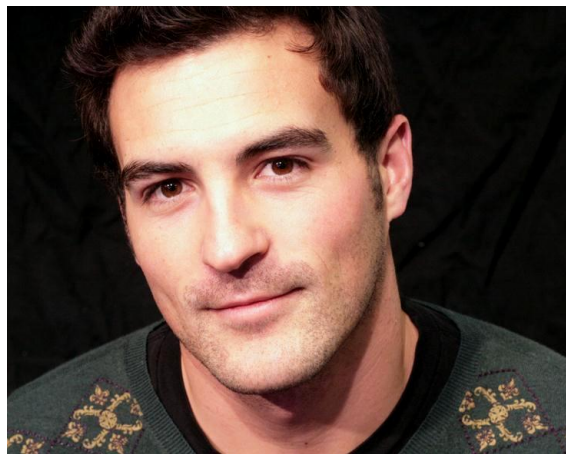
“One needs only to observe the current tragedies that entire populations of Yazidis, Christians, Jews and Muslim minorities face daily in ISIS controlled territories in the Middle East, or the Falun Gong practitioners in China, or by terror groups like Boko Haram in Nigeria.”

“*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.”

We Are the Body takes place in the years following World War II when Europe still seems to be one long trench of suffering. Soviet-style Communism infiltrates all levels of Romanian society. The play parallels the history of Richard Wurmbrand who was imprisoned for 13 years for his work in the Christian Underground—three of those 13 years in prison were spent in solitary confinement, caged in a tiny subterranean cell deprived of all sensory stimulation.

To survive and retain his sanity, Wurmbrand composed sermons and tapped many out in Morse code to fellow prisoners who were also being interrogated and tortured.

“When I came across the writings of Wurmbrand who survived this tyrannical regime and then shared the plight of fellow dissidents with the world, I was astonished at the resilience of people like him who are willing to die for what they believe,” comments playwright Andrew Kooman.



Andrew Kooman, Playwright, *We Are The Body*

“Reading the accounts of survivors who speak so honestly about their experiences of pain, who themselves questions the relevance of faith in the midst of suffering or the goodness of the God they profess to believe under such horrendous circumstances, is fascinating to me.”

Kooman adds, "The story of women and men who stand up for what they believe and who cling to that belief, even when they are knocked off their feet by forces who oppose it, continues to repeat itself through history. I wrote ***We Are the Body*** because I was compelled to explore that very human drama."

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.

"Audiences that were moved by ***She Has A Name***, will also be personally touched by the characters in ***We Are the Body***," says Waldschmidt. "They will not forget Elsie, Richard and Micah, nor the inspiring story of their gripping ordeal."

***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 - Pumphouse Theatres
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**

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

-30-

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

Mr. Neil Bousquet, APR, Media Relations, **Burnt Thicket Theatre**, Cell (250) 689-1856 prwizard@prwizard.ca

Mr. Stephen Waldschmidt, Director, **Burnt Thicket Theatre**, Cell (306) 222-9226 stephenmwaldschmidt@gmail.com