

## MEDIA RELEASE

### *Soulpepper's 2011-12 Academy and a Major Financial Gift*

Toronto, ON – August 10, 2011: Albert Schultz, Founding Artistic Director of Soulpepper Theatre Company, today announced the company's new Academy members, eight Canadian actors from coast-to-coast chosen for a twelve month paid training and performance residency. The 2011-12 Soulpepper Academy is Akosua Amo-Adem, Qasim Khan, Sarah Koehn, Courtney Lancaster, Justin Many Fingers, Hannah Miller, Paolo Santalucia and Daniel Williston.

A generous donation from the Michael & Karen Vukets Family Foundation will help support the Soulpepper Academy from 2011-2013. Their gift, the single-largest donation to support artist training at Soulpepper, will support the Academy for the next three years.

"The incredible support of the Michael & Karen Vukets Family Foundation is instrumental in maintaining the Academy as a professional, paid program for young Canadian theatre artists," said Schultz. "It's gratifying to meet a family who share Soulpepper's excitement about the future of Canadian theatre."

"The arts are a critical element in transforming society," added Michael Vukets. "Our family is pleased to make this investment in the Academy's work of fulfilling the potential of young artists."

Soulpepper's new Academy studies under the guidance of leading theatre practitioners including Laszlo Marton, Guillermo Verdecchia, Diego Matamoros, Daniel Brooks and Leah Cherniak. While part of the Academy, actors receive mentorship from the Soulpepper Company, intensive professional training in ensemble and creation performance, the opportunity to mentor youth and the chance to participate in Soulpepper's 2012 repertory season.

The third Academy class began this past June, and concludes in 2012. Through the Academy, Soulpepper strives to play a significant role in the development of future generations of theatre artists. This full-time, paid training program was launched in 2006.

#### **The 2011-12 Soulpepper Academy**

**Akosua Amo-Adem** recently appeared in Necessary Angel's production of *Tout Comme Elle*. Born in Ghana and raised in Toronto, Akosua holds a BFA from York University. She won the Emerging Artist Award at the 2009 SummerWorks Festival.

**Qasim Khan's** hometown is Newmarket, ON. He holds an Honours BA from the joint University of Toronto and Sheridan College Acting program. He has worked with Theatre Direct, fu-GEN, the Toronto Fringe, and has been seen on *Dan for Mayor* and *Little Mosque on the Prairie*.

**Sarah Koehn** hails from Kingston, ON, and holds a BFA from Memorial University in Newfoundland. She has worked with the Grand Bank Regional Theatre Festival and Sir Wilfred Grenfell College Theatre.

**Courtney Lancaster** is a graduate of the University of British Columbia's BFA Acting Program, and the Citadel/Banff Professional Theatre Program. Her hometown is Antigonish, NS, and she has appeared with Citadel Theatre, Blue Bridge Repertory Theatre and Theatre Conspiracy. She is also the flautist and vocalist for Two Apple Tobacco.

**Justin Many Fingers** is from Lavern, Kainai Blackfoot Reserve, AB, and lives in Toronto, ON. He trained at the Centre for Indigenous Theatre in Toronto, and participated in dance intensives at the Banff Centre, Toronto Dance Theatre and Kaha:wi Dance Theatre.

# soulpepper

---

Theatre Company	Youth Outreach	Artist Training
--------------------	-------------------	--------------------

**Hannah Miller** was raised in Israel and moved to Toronto in pursuit of her acting dreams, where she studied at George Brown Theatre School. While a student, she was the recipient of the Edna Khubyar Acting Award and the Sonja Koerner Award.

**Paolo Santalucia** is from Toronto, ON, where he has appeared with Young People's Theatre, Canopy Theatre and Fly By Night Theatre. He holds an Honours BA from the University of Toronto and an Acting Diploma from the Sheridan Institute of Technology.

**Daniel Williston** is from Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, and studied Music Theatre Performance at the St. Lawrence College in Brockville. Some of his credits include roles in *Fiddler on the Roof* (SLC Stage) and *Mending Fences* (Moose Jaw Repertory Theatre Company), and playing a vaudeville version of himself in *Ain't We Got Fun* (Live Out Loud Theatre).

The Soulpepper Academy is supported by the Michael & Karen Vukets Family Foundation, the Brian Linehan Charitable Foundation, RBC Foundation, Hal Jackman Foundation and individual donors through Soulpepper's Soul Circle Mentors program.

Soulpepper Theatre Company is located in the Young Centre for the Performing Arts, 55 Mill Street, Building 49, in the Distillery Historic District. Tickets are available by calling the Young Centre box office at 416.866.8666 or by visiting [www.soulpepper.ca](http://www.soulpepper.ca). \$22 tickets are available for 21-30 year-olds at [www.stageplay.ca](http://www.stageplay.ca). StagePlay is sponsored by TD Bank Financial Group.

2011 Soulpepper Lead Sponsors are: Sun Life Financial, Scotiabank Group, TELUS and the Michael & Karen Vukets Family Foundation. Soulpepper gratefully acknowledges annual operating support from the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, and the Toronto Arts Council.

*Soulpepper Theatre Company is an artist-founded, classical repertory theatre company with a three-tiered mandate: to present the world's greatest stories in vital Canadian interpretations; to train a new generation of theatre artists; and to inspire and enrich youth through mentorship and access programs.*

-30-

Media Contact: Katie Saunoris, Publicist 416.203.6264 x.146 [katie@soulpepper.ca](mailto:katie@soulpepper.ca)

Individual and group images of the Academy: [http://www.soulpepper.ca/media/media\\_gallery.aspx#part\\_iv](http://www.soulpepper.ca/media/media_gallery.aspx#part_iv)  
*Login: media Password: soulpepper*