

MEDIA RELEASE

Soulpepper presents the original stars and co-creators of a Canadian classic with John Gray and Eric Peterson's Billy Bishop Goes to War

Toronto, ON – July 15, 2009 – **Albert Schultz**, Founding Artistic Director of Soulpepper Theatre Company, today announced that the production of the Canadian classic *Billy Bishop Goes to War*, will run August 8 - 29, 2009, at the Young Centre for the Performing Arts.

Soulpepper gives new life to one of Canadian theatre's enduring legacies in *Billy Bishop Goes to War*, a soaring and exhilarating masterpiece. Original creators **Eric Peterson** and **John Gray** return to the stage in this timeless story of World War One fighter pilot Billy Bishop that has delighted audiences around the world for more than 30 years.

The musical premiered at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre in 1978, and has toured nationally and internationally many times since, as well as inspired a CBC and BBC co-produced television program. *Billy Bishop* won the 1981 Los Angeles Drama Critics' Award, the 1982 Chalmers Canadian Play Award, and the 1983 Governor General's Award for drama, as well as an ACTRA award for best television program. Gray and Peterson revised the show in 1998, adding one new song and presenting events through the eyes of an older Bishop recalling his wartime experiences. *Billy Bishop Goes To War* continues to be one of the most popular Canadian musicals.

Soulpepper Founding Member **Ted Dykstra** directs *Billy Bishop Goes to War* with **Eric Peterson** as Billy Bishop, as well as 17 other characters ranging from King George V to The Lovely Helene, and **John Gray** returning as the Narrator and Pianist.

Previewing August 8, 2009, *Billy Bishop Goes to War* opens August 12 and runs until August 29 at the Young Centre for the Performing Arts, located at 55 Mill Street, Building 49, in the Distillery Historic District. Tickets range from \$28 - \$68 and are available by calling the Young Centre box office at 416.866.8666 or by visiting www.soulpepper.ca. \$20 tickets are available for 21-30 year-olds at www.stageplay.ca.

This production is sponsored by Polar Securities. 2009 Soulpepper Lead Sponsors are: Sun Life Financial, Scotiabank Group and TELUS. 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.

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