

MEDIA RELEASE

Billy Bishop Goes to War *opens Soulpepper's 2010 season*

Toronto, ON – January 6, 2010 – **Albert Schultz**, Founding Artistic Director of Soulpepper Theatre Company, today announced that the company's highly successful 2009 production of the Canadian classic *Billy Bishop Goes to War* will return to open Soulpepper's 2010 season. Soulpepper's 2009 presentation of *Billy Bishop Goes to War* was 100% sold out.

John Gray and **Eric Peterson's** timeless story of World War One fighter pilot Billy Bishop 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's 2009 production of *Billy Bishop Goes to War* was widely critically acclaimed and was lauded as a hit of the 2009 theatre season by *Eye Weekly*, *The Globe and Mail*, *National Post*, *Toronto Star*, and *Toronto Sun*.

"Thirty years on, *Billy Bishop* still soars" *The Globe and Mail*

"Better than ever...this show is not to be missed" *Toronto Star*

"*Billy Bishop Goes to War* changed my life...Ted Dykstra's production is perfection"

- *NOW Magazine*

"Peterson acs *Billy Bishop*" *Toronto Sun*

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.

Billy Bishop Goes to War previews January 22, 2009, opens January 26, and runs until February 27 at the Young Centre for the Performing Arts, located at 55 Mill Street, Building 49, in the Distillery Historic District. Tickets range from \$29 - \$70 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. StagePlay is sponsored by TD Bank Financial Group.

This production is sponsored by Polar Securities. 2010 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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