

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SOULPEPPER ANNOUNCES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – CIVICALLY MINDED ARTS LEADER & ADVOCATE GIDEON ARTHURS

Toronto, ON – January 10, 2022: Soulpepper Theatre Company is pleased to announce the appointment of **Gideon Arthurs** as the Company's new Executive Director, joining the Executive team alongside Artistic Director Weyni Mengesha. Gideon is an exemplary Canadian arts leader and brings incredible experience, ideas, ambition, and civic knowledge from the local and national levels to Soulpepper as the Company celebrates its 25th anniversary.

"The Soulpepper Board of Directors is thrilled to welcome Gideon to the Company. He has extensive management experience in the theatre sector and is known as an open and collaborative leader with a reputation as a community builder. He is immensely respected for his empathetic leadership as well as his financial acumen. And we're delighted that he is coming home to Soulpepper," said **Vanessa Morgan**, Chair of the Board.

"The Search Committee ran an extensive search process resulting in Gideon's appointment. His passion, energy, experience, and business sense will be a terrific asset for our organization and allow us to draw broader support from our growing community. Gideon is passionate about creating a more equitable and inclusive arts community and actively supporting Soulpepper's commitment to Radical Inclusion. We are very fortunate at Soulpepper to welcome Gideon as our new Executive Director," said **Sanjay Nakra**, Chair of the Search Committee.

Gideon, a Toronto local, is coming to Soulpepper following nearly eight years as the Chief Executive Officer of the National Theatre School of Canada, the country's preeminent theatre training organization. Under his tenure, Gideon has put in place initiatives that created a more diverse, inclusive, and open institution. Prior to that he led several major projects, as General Manager of Tarragon Theatre, Executive Director of the Toronto Fringe Festival, as well as serving on Boards of the Montréal Arts Council, Culture Montréal, and the Small Theatre Administrative Facility (now Generator).

"I am delighted to be returning to Toronto and to Soulpepper, where my life in arts administration began. I am thrilled at the prospect of working with the dynamic leadership team, and in particular to support the extraordinary work of my new collaborator Weyni. We share a vision that theatre is more necessary than ever and that our institutions must work to become more ethical, inclusive, and civically engaged. Despite the ongoing pandemic, Soulpepper is poised for an exciting chapter of its evolution, even as it celebrates its 25th anniversary. I feel truly blessed to be part of this ambitious project and am looking forward to serving the artists and audiences of Soulpepper as they rediscover each other soon. My thanks to the Search Committee and of course, to my dear colleagues at the National Theatre School of Canada, who inspire me every day," said **Gideon Arthurs**, Incoming Executive Director.

Gideon is ambitious and civically minded, believing that being an artist should be considered a civil service, which aligns his vision and leadership in stride with Soulpepper's Artistic Director Weyni Mengesha. This role is a homecoming in many ways for Gideon, returning to Toronto, his hometown, and to Soulpepper after 14 years. In 2007/08, Gideon and Weyni worked closely and collaboratively together at Soulpepper – him as the Company Manager, and her as an Academy Graduate and Resident Artist. This history, along with Weyni's incredible

artistic vision and Gideon's skillful leadership, poises them beautifully to lead Soulpepper into its next chapter together.

"I am thrilled that Gideon is Soulpepper's new Executive Director. He is a smart thinker, a big dreamer, an invaluable advocate, and he cares deeply about the cultural landscape of arts in this country. I have known Gideon for a long time and his values are evident through all of his work at training institutions, festivals, and theatres. I am excited to see all that we can create at Soulpepper together as we push the Company forward in its ambition to be an inclusive, civic, arts and training institution," said **Weyni Mengesha**, Artistic Director.

Reporting, along with the Artistic Director, directly to the Board of Directors, the Executive Director is wholly responsible for leading the administrative, financial, and general operations of the Company, including oversight of a skilled senior team. Gideon will assume his duties part-time in March 2022, and full-time in May. The Board of Directors' Search Committee worked closely with Searchlight Recruitment, and also considered input from the Company, to find the successful candidate.

Despite the recent restrictions on theatrical performances, Soulpepper is looking at 2022 with optimism and is excited to finally return to the stage and welcome audiences back to celebrate the Company's 25th anniversary, with new leadership and new stories.

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Located in its multi-venue home, the Young Centre for the Performing Arts in Toronto's Distillery Historic District, Soulpepper is Toronto's largest not-for-profit theatre company. Founded and guided by artists, Soulpepper has an integrated mission which includes: industry-leading youth and community outreach initiatives; artist training and mentorship programs; and a year-round diverse repertory season which is grounded in the classics and committed to the creation of new works, new forms, and innovative practices.

The artists and staff of Soulpepper and the Young Centre for the Performing Arts acknowledge the original caretakers and storytellers of the land on which we are situated – the Wendat, the Haudenosaunee, and the Anishanabek First Nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit. We commit to honouring and celebrating their past, present and future. Soulpepper believes people have a right to express their individuality, to experience creative freedom, to feel safe at all times, and to be treated with dignity and respect.

Tickets are available at soulpepper.ca. All ticket prices include a Young Centre facility fee, service charge and HST. Pricing is subject to change.

Soulpepper gratefully acknowledges annual operating support from the Ontario Arts Council, the Toronto Arts Council, and the Canada Council for the Arts.

Soulpepper is pleased to recognize the donors of transformational gifts to its Creative Capital Campaign: The Slight Family; The Government of Ontario; and Kevin and Roger Garland.

Support for the Soulpepper Academy is provided by the RBC Emerging Artists Project, the Government of Canada through the Arts Training Fund, Sylvia Soyka and the Kingfisher Foundation.

Soulpepper is grateful for additional major support from Scotiabank and The Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation; and additional lead support from: CIBC; the TD Ready Commitment; Sun Life; BMO Financial Group; Canada Life; and Diane Blake & Stephen Smith.

Support on our Stages comes from: The Slight Family Foundation as Music Program Sponsor including for *The Golden Record* and the complement of Slight Music Residents; Middlefield Group as Production Sponsor for

The Golden Record; Diane Blake and Stephen Smith for *Where The Blood Mixes*; Soulpepper Supporting Top Women and Sylvia Soyka for *Queen Goneril*; and Polar Asset Management Partners for *King Lear*.

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For more information please contact:

Milusha Copas, Communications & Media Officer: milusha.copas@soulpepper.ca

Media Gallery:

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