



For Immediate Release
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MEDIA RELEASE

THEATRE CALGARY CLOSES 2018-19 WITH MUSIC, BALLET, AND AN ALL CALGARY CAST IN ***BILLY ELLIOT THE MUSICAL***

APRIL 9 – MAY 12, 2019

(CALGARY, AB) - Theatre Calgary is set to close the 2018-19 season with a wonderful story about following your dreams as we present *Billy Elliot The Musical*, book and lyrics by **Lee Hall**, and music by **Elton John**.

This Tony Award-winning musical is an inspiring and moving tale about the importance of following your heart. Set in working-class England, young Billy dreams of trading in his boxing gloves for ballet slippers, but his widowed father cannot understand his passion. A celebration of Calgary's local talent, this rendition of *Billy Elliot The Musical* is choreographed by former Alberta Ballet principal dancer **Yukichi Hattori**, directed by Artistic Director **Stafford Arima**, and features some of the best and brightest of Calgary's professional theatre and dance community.

"Billy Elliot The Musical is pure magic," says Arima, who pursued his own childhood dream of directing in professional theatre. *"This heartfelt and undeniably entertaining musical, by music legend Elton John, makes me laugh, cry, and beam with joy. Billy is a courageous young boy who takes a leap of faith and, against all odds, defies expectations. This tale is a compelling reminder to live one's dream and be proud of who you are."*

"Billy's innocence reminds me of why I started, and why we all started," says Hattori. *"It's why we keep this beautiful art form of dance and theatre going. At the end of the day, what matters is your passion, and why you do it."*

Billy Elliot The Musical features two young actors in the title role. **Rhett Udsen** (14) and **Dex Drewitz** (10) will alternate playing Billy Elliot, splitting performances for the entire run. Rounding out the all-Calgary cast are **Amber Bissonnette** (Ensemble), **Kevin Corey** (George), **Jaya Del Greco** (Ensemble), **Dennis Robert Dubbin** (Jackie Elliot), **Marc-Emile Fallu** (Michael), **Jillian Hannah** (Ensemble), **Kathryn Kerbes** (Grandma), **Fionn Laird** (Ensemble), **Ryan Maschke** (Ensemble), **Caitlyne Medrek** (Mrs. Wilkinson), **Glen Mills** (Ensemble), **Katelyn Morishita** (Ensemble), **Steven Morton** (Ensemble), **Robyn Neumann** (Ensemble), **Scott Olynek** (Ensemble), **Michelle Rawlings** (Dead Mum), **Joel Schaefer** (Mr. Braithwaite), **Alex Smith** (Tony Elliot), **Julianne Smith** (Ensemble), **Connor Stuart** (Big Davey), **Kelsey Woodard** (Ensemble), **Nicole Woodard** (Ensemble), **Siena Yee** (Ensemble).

Along with director Arima, and choreographer Hattori, the creative team includes **Don Horsburgh** (Music Director), **Scott Reid** (Set & Projection Design), **Cory Sincennes** (Costume Design), **Alan Brodie** (Lighting Design), **Joshua D. Reid** (Sound Design), **Mark Limacher** (Associate Music Director), **Brock Jellison** (Associate Choreographer), **Jane MacFarlane** (Voice and Dialect Coach), **Braden Griffiths** (Acting Coach - Billy), and **Karl H. Sine** (Fight Director). The Stage Manager is **Jennifer Swan**, Assistant Stage Managers are **Patti Neice** and **Carissa Sams**, and the Apprentice Stage Manager is **Nicole Olson Grant-Suttie**.

Billy Elliot The Musical previews April 9-11. Opening night is April 12. Performances run Tuesday thru Sunday with evening curtain at 7:30pm (Tues-Thurs & Sunday) and 8:00pm (Fri & Sat), weekend matinees at 2:00pm. Tickets for all performances start as low as \$45.00 and can be purchased through Theatre Calgary at 403-294-7447 or online at theatrecalgary.com. All performances take place in Arts Commons Max Bell Theatre.

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For more information or interview requests please contact:
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TELEVISION/VIDEO MEDIA CALL - WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 1:00pm
Max Bell Theatre, Arts Commons PRINT - photos available upon request