

NEWS RELEASE – May 4, 2018, VANCOUVER, BC, CANADA

Macbeth opens the 29<sup>th</sup> Season of Bard on the Beach

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### Macbeth opens the 29<sup>th</sup> season of Bard on the Beach

May 4, 2018, Vancouver, B.C. - [Bard on the Beach Shakespeare Festival](#) opens its 29<sup>th</sup> Season in Vanier Park with one of Shakespeare's most thrilling and most popular tragedies. This production of [Macbeth](#) will be directed by Crow's Theatre (Toronto) Artistic Director [Chris Abraham](#) in his directorial debut at Bard on the Beach.

This year's production of **Macbeth** features celebrated Canadian actors **Ben Carlson** as Macbeth and **Moya O'Connell** as Lady Macbeth. Carlson has been a featured player at the Stratford and Shaw Festivals in Ontario for over two decades and O'Connell returns to Bard on the Beach after spending the last ten seasons at the Shaw Festival.

"*Macbeth* is a masterpiece, and the roles of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are two of the most terrifying and devastating tragic figures imagined by Shakespeare," explains Abraham. "At times chillingly amoral, and at others superhumanly sublime in their suffering, the two characters together are, Shakespeare's most finely drawn portrait of marriage. It's my great privilege to be working with two of the country's most accomplished classical actors on this incredible contemporary meditation on power, patriarchy, fate and free will."

Joining the cast alongside Carlson and O'Connell are **Lindsey Angell, Scott Bellis, Kate Besworth, Nicco Del Rio, Austin Eckert, Ben Elliott, Jeff Gladstone, Kayvon Khoshkam, Craig Erickson, Nadeem Phillip, Harveen Sandhu, Emma Slipp** and **Andrew Wheeler**.

"Bard on the Beach has assembled an incredible ensemble with deep bench strength," adds Abraham. "As a team, we are working hard to illuminate the grandeur of this play. I feel very fortunate to be working in a community I've admired from afar for so long."

Along with his contemporary work at Crow's Theatre, Mr. Abraham has also directed acclaimed productions of *Taming of the Shrew*, *Othello* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Stratford Festival in Canada.

"I've done radical re-workings of Shakespeare's plays, but in other instances, I've been drawn to the aesthetics and conventions of the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage," says Abraham. "For **Macbeth** at Bard, I've taken inspiration from the 1607 open-air playhouse setting of the play's first production. We've embraced daylight and are conjuring the darkness of the play out of light. I wanted to strip the play down to its muscular core. It is a Jacobean production, but anchored in a very visceral approach to the language and staging. It's an opportunity to see the play in something like the conditions his first audiences might have."

Scenery Designer, **Pam Johnson**, has channelled the architecture of the Globe Theatre alongside **Christine Reimer's** Early Jacobean period costumes. Sound Designer/Composer **Owen Belton** is providing original music. Additional members of Macbeth's production team include **Gerald King** (Lighting Designer), **Jonathan Purvis** (Fight Director), **Jacqueline Loewen** (Associate Fight Director), **Marie Farsi** (Apprentice Director), **Alaia Hamer** (Costume Design Apprentice) and **Alison Matthews** (Head Voice & Text Coach). They are supported by **Stephen Courtenay** (Production Stage Manager), **Rebecca Mulvihill** (Assistant Stage Manager) and **Jenny Kim** (Apprentice Stage Manager).

#### Dates of note for Macbeth include:

OPENING NIGHT – Sunday, June 17 at 7:30 pm

[TALKBACK TUESDAYS](#) – July 3, July 31, August 7 and August 28 at 7:30 pm

[WINE WEDNESDAYS](#) – July 11 at 7:30 pm and September 5 at 7:30 pm

CLOSING NIGHT – Thursday, September 13 at 7:30 pm

Ticket prices for all regular play performances start at **\$24 CAD**. Early booking is recommended for best seat selection, as many performances sell out in advance. The full performance schedule, site information and play and special events details are on the Bard website at [bardonthebeach.org](http://bardonthebeach.org). To book tickets, [order online](#) through the Bard website or call the Bard Box Office at **604-739-0559** or (toll free) **1-877-739-0559**.

**Suggested Tweet:** *Shakespeare's harrowing drama #MACBETH opens the 29<sup>th</sup> season of @bardonthebeach June 6 to September 13. #bard2018 <https://bit.ly/2HmMS2r>*

#### **About Bard on the Beach Shakespeare Festival**

[Bard on the Beach](#) is one of Canada's largest not-for-profit, professional Shakespeare festivals. Established in 1990, the annual summer festival's mission is to perform, explore and celebrate the genius of William Shakespeare, surrounded by the natural beauty of Vancouver, British Columbia. Bard also offers year-round education and training programs for youth, adults and theatre professionals in its administrative home at the BMO Theatre Centre in Olympic Village as well as in schools and community facilities throughout the Lower Mainland of British Columbia.

Bard on the Beach gratefully acknowledges the corporate sponsors who support the Festival and its programs. 2018 sponsors include season sponsor Goldcorp; production sponsors RE/MAX, Lawson Lundell, Lonetree Cider and BlueShore Financial; media sponsors the Vancouver Sun and Global BC, as well as other valued sponsors and supporters. Bard also thanks the City of Vancouver Cultural Services Department, the Vancouver Parks Board, the Province of British Columbia, the B.C. Arts Council, and the Canada Council for the Arts for their continuing support.