

# ODYSSEY theatre

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Exciting Growth of New Play Creation Program**

Ottawa, ON, December 13, 2011 – Odyssey is thrilled to announce that Ottawa’s distinguished playwright, dramaturge and director, Janet Irwin, has joined the Theatre as a Company Dramaturge and Associate Artistic Director for the 2013 season. As a leader of Odyssey’s New Play Creation Program, Janet will provide local writers with dramaturgical and training support and direct workshops of scripts under development.

Janet is a 35-year theatre veteran who has written plays for the Great Canadian Theatre Company (GCTC), Upper Canada Playhouse, Caravan Stage and the National Arts Centre (NAC). As a director she has worked with companies including the NAC, the GCTC, Easy Street Productions, Upper Canada Playhouse, Opera Lyra Ottawa, the Manitoba Popular Theatre Alliance, Third Wall Theatre, and CanPlay Productions. She is the former Dramaturge for NAC/GCTC’s Playwright Unit and former President of Theatre Ontario. For Odyssey, Janet directed *The Barber of Seville* and wrote *They All Do It*, which Odyssey premiered in the summer of 2010.

Odyssey’s New Play Creation Program, unique in Canada, provides writers with skills in movement-based theatre forms and collaborative creators with structured approaches to new play development. It has led to groundbreaking productions. Odyssey has taken 19 new plays or original translations/adaptations into full production, held public workshop performances of nine additional works, and supported more than 30 creators, including independent artists and those pursuing projects for Odyssey.

“We are thrilled to have Janet with us this season,” said Dana Uzarevic, Odyssey’s General Manager. “Writers participating in our program will greatly benefit from her extensive experience with new play creation.”

Odyssey current writer-in-residence, Kathy MacLellan, a principal with Rag and Bone Puppet Theatre, is working on a new play *Steampunk Golem*, which explores human need to be guided by the heart while finding a way to give other intelligences and other ways of thinking a place in our society. Other writer participations in the program include: Joanne Miller who is writing an original translation/adaptation of Lesage’s classical masterpiece *Turcaret*; Balwant Bhaneja who is adapting Ottawa writer Mark Fruitkin’s Trillium award-winning novel *Fabrizio’s Return*; David S. Craig who will work on a new adaptation of the classical comedy *Lysistrata* by Aristophanes; and Zachary Council who is creating an original one man show based on Commedia character Il Dottore.

Odyssey’s Artistic Director Laurie Steven will also devote a year to writing scripts, including an original work *The Firebird*, inspired by the Russian folk tale. During Laurie’s absence, Janet Irwin will be Odyssey’s Associate Artistic Director.

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**For more information:**

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