**CATR 2016**

**Plenary Speakers: biographies**

**ANDY CURTIS**

Andy Curtis has been part of Calgary’s One Yellow Rabbit Theatre ensemble since 1984 and has performed and toured in numerous original shows, including: *Ilsa Queen Of The Nazi Love Camp, Doing Leonard Cohen, Dream Machine, Kawasaki Exit* (in Japanese), *Munich Now* (in German), *What The Thunder Said, Calgary I Love You But You’re Killing Me* (at the 2016 High Performance Rodeo- OYR’s festival of new performance), and most recently- *Radioheaded3*. Andy has worked with many Calgary theatres including: Theatre Calgary, Alberta Theatre Projects, Lunchbox Theatre, Ground Zero, Vertigo Theatre, Quest Theatre, Stage West and Ghost River Theatre.

He recently performed in *Making Treaty 7*, an ongoing project which explores the historical significance and aftermath of the events which took place at Blackfoot Crossing in 1877, and recently participated in a workshop with Quest Theatre to adapt the show for student audiences. Upcoming projects include an OYR/ Soulpepper collaboration and the premiere of John Murrell’s *Fat Jack Falstaff’s Last Hour* at the Big Secret Theatre in November 2016.

**MICHELE DECOTTIGNIES**

Michele is a multiple award-winning producer, presenter, playwright, director, designer and arts administrator with 30 years experience in the arts and in grass-roots community organizing. She founded Stage Left to house her innovative blend of professional arts production, bottom-up change processes and radical social justice. Her artistic vision is to disrupt dominant social paradigms that render difference invisible and/or undesirable in society. An under-educated, working class, transnational lesbian feminist activist with several invisible disabilities, Michele's practice is necessarily concerned with the development of artistic and cultural practices that nurture rather than negate diversity.  Before Stage Left, Michele had the good fortune to work with activist groups, social justice organizations and human service providers - collaborating with diverse communities to affect both individual and structural change. Michele has worked in a variety of artistic, technical, administrative and/or advisory roles for many different professional and community arts companies in Alberta. She has pioneered applied arts practices in Aboriginal Health Education, Adult Education, Mental Health, Independent Living, Social Work, Youth Criminal Justice and more. Michele graduated with distinction from Mount Royal College's Theatre Arts Diploma Program, and also holds a a self-directed BFA in Secondary Drama Education from the University of Calgary.

**CHERYL FOGGO**

A Calgary freelancer well known for her work uncovering the stories of Alberta’s early Black pioneers, Cheryl Foggo has worked as a playwright, screenwriter, filmmaker, young adult novelist, fiction, non-fiction and children’s book author. She is profiled in *Who’s Who in Black Canada* and is a former recipient of the Gwen Pharis Ringwood Award for Drama for *John Ware Reimagined* in 2015, as well as theHarry Jerome Award For The Arts*,* the Sondra Kelly Screenplay Award*,* the Obsidian Professional of the Year Award,and a Chris Awardat the Columbus International Film and Video Festival (*The Journey of Lesra Martin*). Her produced and/or published plays and books, which include *John Ware Reimagined, The Devil We Know, Heaven, Turnaround, Dear Baobab, Pourin Down Rain, One Thing that’s True* and *I Have Been in Danger*,have received numerous awards nominations. Selected nominations and shortlists include the Governor General’s Award,the AMPIA Award, the Betty Mitchell Award, the R. Ross Annett Award, the BC National Playwriting Competition and the Alberta Culture Literary Award for Non-fiction. She has also been published as a journalist in dozens of magazines, anthologies and newspapers.

**KAREN HINES**

Born in Chicago, raised in Toronto, Karen Hines is a Second City alumna and a Gemini-nominated actor whose film and television work includes three seasons on Ken Finkleman’s Emmy Award-winning (Canadian) *Newsroom*. She has written six award-winning plays, and is a two-time finalist for the Governor General’s Literary Award for Drama*.* On stage, she has performed at many venues from Canadian Stage to the Royal Shakespeare Company to Joe’s Pub. She is a Dora Award-winning performer and director, having directed all of adult horror clowns Mump & Smoot’s shows for 27 years, as well as premiere productions of Linda Griffiths *Age of Arousal* (ATP) and *HeavenAbove/HeavenBelow* (Theatre Passe Muraille). Her performances and productions have been presented across North America and overseas. Since moving to Calgary eight years ago, Karen has won Western and National Magazine Awards for her humour columns with *Swerve Magazine*, and her work has appeared in *Geist*, *Reader’s Digest* and *Brick*. She was Alberta Theatre Project’s playwright in residence where her *Drama: Pilot Episode* was premiered. She has also made her first short films, featuring her theatrical character Pochsy*,* which have screened on five continents. Recent theatre engagements include her solo at Toronto’s Videofag – *Crawlspace –* which was named one of the *Globe & Mail*’s top ten shows of 2015 and which will return to Toronto and Calgary next season. Karen’s newest play will be presented by One Yellow Rabbit in the 2017 High Performance Rodeo; starring Denise Clarke with Blake Brooker directing, the play is entitled *All the Little Animals I Have Eaten*.

**MICHELLE THRUSH**

Michelle has been working professionally in film, television and theatre for over

twenty-five years – having experienced her first film role at the age of seventeen. At the age of twenty-one Michelle pursued her dream of acting professionally. Michelle is a multiple award-winning actress; in 2011 she received a Gemini award (Canadian Screen Award) for her role on the APTN hit series *Blackstone*. She has over forty professional credits in the entertainment industry, and has starred opposite Benicio del Toro in *AKA: JIMMY P*, which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival. Michelle uses her gift as an actor to promote healing through the arts to explore creative expression. Her work with youth and children is her greatest passion with characters such as Majica – The Aboriginal Healing Clown and Kookum Martha, a sprite old Indian Elder. Michelle is also well known for her community work across the country as a keynote and public speaker, addressing important issues through comedy and performance.

**TROY EMERY TWIGG**

Troy is an artist who works in theatre and dance as a choreographer, performer, storyteller and educator. He is from the Kainai Blackfoot Nation in Southern Alberta. His work has been presented Internationally, Europe and nationally from Vancouver (Dancing on the Edge) to Halifax (Prismatic) and almost everywhere in between. He was an artists in residence at the Banff Centre for the Arts for several projects and including, starting in February 2013, exploring the idea of *Making Treaty 7* with 18 artists from the area which is now in its 4th year having premiered in Calgary 2014. His work on Itahpoyii has toured and landed at the Fluid Festival in Calgary in October 2015 Troy is based in Southern Alberta, working on a couple projects including “Dancing the Universe in Flux” based on the Native Paradigm lectures of Dr. Leroy Little Bear and the YMT7/Quest Theatre collaboration creating an elementary school version of *Making Treaty 7*. Troy has been recently been appointed the Artistic Director of Making Treaty 7 Cultural Society.