

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**North American premiere of *Ballad of the Burning Star*
drag cabaret show from London's Theatre Ad Infinitum
May 19 – 24, 2015**

"A theatrical hand grenade" – The Guardian ★★★★★

Toronto, ON, March 31, 2015 – Acting Up Stage Company and Why Not Theatre in association with the [Koffler Centre of the Arts](#) present the North American premiere of *Ballad of the Burning Star* by London-based [Theatre Ad Infinitum](#). A major hit across the U.K., this provocative drag cabaret show explores the psychological impact of the Israel-Palestine conflict. *Ballad of the Burning Star* runs from May 19 to 24 at the Theatre Centre, 1115 Queen St. West. Free pre-show receptions including snacks and beverages take place in the lobby 45 minutes before each performance, and local experts including have been invited to discuss themes relevant to *Ballad*.

Ballad of the Burning Star draws on co-artistic director **Nir Paldi**'s personal experiences, family stories, and the testimony of Israel Defence Forces (IDF) soldiers. Armed with music, killer heels, and the Starlets — a lethal troop of dancing, singing divas — an enraged Israeli executes a personal story of victimhood, persecution, aggression and love. With shrapnel-sharp voices and moves as smooth as an oiled tank chain, this cabaret troop invites audiences on a journey into the core of the conflicted Jewish State.

"Delving into the world of cabaret, drag, and bringing in an international all-female chorus seemed like the perfect way to lead our spectators on a tragic and explosive journey to the Holy Land. With *Ballad*, we hope to create an open dialogue so that people will actually speak to one another and see the human beings behind the myths that we are told, behind the stamp of 'the enemy.' We need to try and make life better for one another, so we probably should find a way of getting along a bit better," says Paldi.

Theatre Ad Infinitum (*Translunar Paradise*, *The Big Smoke*, *Odyssey*) took the 2013 Edinburgh Festival by storm with this feisty tale, described as "a thrillingly edgy piece of entertainment" (The Scotsman). The cast recently completed its second tour of *Ballad of the Burning Star*, visiting 15 venues across England in the fall of 2014. *Ballad* has won multiple awards and accolades, including the Stage Award for Best Ensemble, The Guardian's 'Best of the Edinburgh Fringe', and the 'Sixth Star' Bobby Award from Broadway Baby. *The Guardian* wrote, "There was so much wit, energy and guile piled into *Ballad of the Burning Star* it was hard to process it all on the hop – I can't recall the last time I sat sweating in a theatre from mental effort."

What the critics say about *Ballad of the Burning Star*:

"Brilliant ... Breathlessly inventive" – The Observer

"Exposing, raw and emotionally loaded" – The Stage

"Brave, feisty and thought-provoking theatre that should not be missed" – British Theatre Guide

"A welcome and audacious reminder of how ground-breaking the theatre can really be."
– The Skinny

"One of the most original, risk-taking and astonishingly successful shows you'll ever encounter."

– Theatre Guide London

Ballad of the Burning Star is part of the Koffler's contemporary cultural offerings for Spring 2015, which include visual arts, literary, and live performance programming. For more information and a full list of the Koffler's Spring 2015 programs, please visit kofflerarts.org

This presentation is generously supported by the Department of Canadian Heritage, The Canada Council for the Arts, The Ontario Arts Council, and the Toronto Arts Council.

PLEASE INCLUDE IN YOUR LISTINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Ballad of the Burning Star

May 19 – 24, 2015 at 8 pm, with 2 pm matinees on May 23 and 24

A Theatre Ad Infinitum production

Co-presented by Acting Up Stage Company and Why Not Theatre in association with Koffler Centre of the Arts.

The Theatre Centre | 1115 Queen Street West

Tickets: Regular \$35-\$49.99 | \$30 preview

Students+arts workers+under 30 \$19.99

[PURCHASE ONLINE](#) or by phone: 416-538-0988

FREE pre-show chats 45 minutes before curtain time.

ABOUT THE KOFFLER CENTRE OF THE ARTS

The Koffler Centre of the Arts is a Jewish cultural organization that presents a cross-disciplinary, contemporary arts program that encourages inquiry and exploration. We promote an inter-cultural dialogue that engages our Jewish identity with diverse perspectives and global voices. The Koffler Gallery and its administrative offices are located at Artscape Youngplace, in Toronto's vibrant downtown West Queen West art and design district.

Koffler Centre of the Arts acknowledges the support of the Koffler Family Foundation, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, Cultural Season Sponsor CIBC Wood Gundy, the Ontario Arts Council through the Community and Multidisciplinary Arts Organizations Program, our patrons and donors.

ABOUT THEATRE AD INFINITUM

Theatre Ad Infinitum is a multi-award-winning international ensemble based in London that develops new and original theatre for multi-cultural audiences.

We all share a passion for innovative theatre making that speaks to a global community, and create performances that harness the universal language of the body. Drawing on our differences in culture, nationality, and language we produce a unique and engaging form of theatre unified by our commitment to the audience.

That you may be moved, challenged and inspired by our work is our first priority.

ABOUT ACTING UP STAGE COMPANY

Acting Up Stage Company produces entertaining and poignant contemporary musicals, brings new Canadian musicals to life, and develops the artists and audiences of tomorrow.

Since 2004, they have been rewarded time and again with rave reviews, sold-out performances, eight Toronto Theatre Critics' Awards, thirty-seven Dora Mavor Moore Award nominations and seven wins. In 2013-2014, the company celebrated its 10-year anniversary. Past productions include *The Wild Party*, *Elegies: A Song Cycle*, *Once On This Island*, *Falsettos*, *Do You Want What I Have Got? A Craigslist Cantata*, *Caroline, or Change*, *Ride The Cyclone*, *Parade*, and *The Light In The Piazza*.

ABOUT WHY NOT THEATRE

Founded in 2007, Why Not Theatre is a Toronto-based theatre company with an international scope. Under the Artistic Direction of Ravi Jain, Why Not has established a reputation as a company synonymous with inventive, experimental, cross-cultural collaborations resulting in shows featuring new Canadian writing, company-devised and site specific shows alongside revitalized interpretations of classics. Over the last 7 years we have developed over 12 productions, touring to 20 different cities on 4 continents. In recent years, the company has also become known for its presentation of international productions and workshops from diverse cultures and artistic practices, along with support for the development of local emerging artists and companies.

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For further information and high resolution images, contact:

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