

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Koffler Hosts Panel Conversation with Ballad of the Burning Star's Nir Paldi May 14, 7 PM

**Toronto, ON, May 11, 2015** – On May 14 at 7 PM, the <u>Koffler Centre of the Arts</u> presents a panel conversation with Toronto theatre artists and **Nir Paldi**, Artistic Director of London-based <u>Theatre Ad</u> <u>Infinitum</u> and star of **Ballad of the Burning Star**, which receives its North American premiere May 19 to 24. The conversation will explore issues of identity and culture in theatre, and the event takes place at Small World Music Centre, 180 Shaw Street. Admission is free.

Also participating in the discussion are local Toronto theatre artists with particular interest in contemporary performance theory and conceptual art practices: **Ruth Madoc-Jones** (freelance director and dramaturg), **Jennifer Capraru** (Artistic Director, Theatre Asylum), and **Ella Cooper** (multi-disciplinary artist and filmmaker). Moderated by **Jessica Wyman** (OCADU professor and art critic), the panel will discuss how various forms and approaches to theatre can be used to explore and challenge complex issues of identity and culture.

A major hit across the U.K., *Ballad of the Burning Star* explores the psychological impact of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This provocative drag cabaret show draws on **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.

Ballad of the Burning Star was created by Theatre Ad Infinitum and took the 2013 Edinburgh Festival by storm. The Toronto production takes place at the Theatre Centre and is presented by Acting Up Stage Company and Why Not Theatre in association with the Koffler Centre of the Arts. Free pre-show receptions including beverages take place in the lobby 45 minutes before each performance, hosted by Acting Up Stage Company and featuring speaker Naomi Tessler of Branch Out Theatre who will discuss art's role in creating dialogue, conflict resolution, and social change.

*Ballad of the Burning Star* and the panel conversation are 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 <u>kofflerarts.org</u>

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.

Panel Conversation: Identity and Culture in Theatre Thursday May 14, 7 PM | Small World Music Centre | 180 Shaw Street | FREE Presented by the Koffler Centre of the Arts. kofflerarts.org

## 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.

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## For further information and high resolution images, contact:

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