**Kim McCaw (1952-2025)**

With the quiet passing of Kim McCaw at age 73 on September 25th, 2025, the Edmonton theatre community again lost one of its own; the prairies, a uniquely effervescent and innovative creative energy; and Canada, a significant director, dramaturge, educator, and mentor, who for over forty years ceaselessly advocated for Canadian artists, theatre workers and for the Canadian theatre itself through his lifelong commitment to its nurturing and development: “He mentored emerging and established artists coast to coast, helping to develop a generation of talent and create an understanding that Canadian-made art is not only entertaining, but, in fact, essential” (*Globe and Mail*).

Born in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan in 1952, McCaw’s passion for theatre first manifested itself in high school in Saskatoon, then propelled him first to the University of Victoria, then into the acting program at the National Theatre School in Montréal, where he met his wife, Linda Huffman. After graduation (1974), the couple returned to the prairies in 1978, to work as Artistic Associates at Regina’s Globe Theatre, before moving to Winnipeg in 1983, where McCaw assumed the position of Artistic Director of the Prairie Theatre Exchange (PTE).

Under McCaw’s tenure (1983 and 1991) the theatre moved into a new phase of growth and consolidation with a firm mandate to develop and feature prairie and Canadian work. Award-winning playwright, Vern Thiessen, who credits McCaw as an important mentor, praised the latter’s ability to take on brave, “bizarre, risky” experiments, like McCaw’s own five-character, English-language premiere of Rene-Daniel Dubois’ absurdist one-man show, *Don’t Blame the Bedouins* (1987-88 season). Thiessen, who was in the cast, notes: “I’ve never acted in a show before where people walked out during the show – a lot. And that was not an easy thing to do in the old space. You literally had to cross the stage to do it.” However, McCaw was also known for the number of regional playwrights, including Wendy Lill, Ted Galay, Bruce McManus, and Patrick Friesen, whose works were premiered during his tenure. Notes colleague, Matine Friesen, “It was still sort of fairly new on the prairies to have plays about this place. ...He was really instrumental in developing a canon of Canadian theatre that would speak to a very specific part of Canada. That was revolutionary” (“PTE Artistic Director”).

In 1997, McCaw moved to Edmonton to take up a position as professor of directing, acting and dramaturgy at the University of Alberta, where he continued to help develop another “generation of talent” (1997-2016) over the next two decades. However, he will probably be remembered most for his lifelong passion for directing – he directed more than 130 plays in theatres across the country – and for dramaturgy and play development. This was especially reflected in his role as Director of the Banff Playwrights Colony (Lab) (1989-1997), Resident Guest Dramaturg at the Playwrights Atlantic Resource Centre Playwrights’ Retreat, and Director of the Canadian Centre for Theatre Creation (2008-2013). In 1993, the Playwrights’ Workshop Montréal awarded him the National Play Development Award.

Our heartfelt sympathy is extended to Kim McCaw’s large circle of family, friends and colleagues and especially to his lifelong partner in life and art, Linda Huffman, and their children, Patrick and Maggie. He will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

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