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ANNOUNCING THE WINNER OF THE RBC TARRAGON UNDER 30 NATIONAL PLAYWRITING COMPETITION

Tarragon Theatre and RBC Foundation are pleased to announce the winner of the second annual RBC Tarragon Under 30 National Playwriting Competition: ***I Drag My Coffin Through The Lonesome North*** by **Matthew Heiti**.

I Drag My Coffin Through The Lonesome North by **Matthew Heiti** was selected as the winner from a shortlist of seven plays that included:

- *The Trailer* by **Jessica Nellanne Bloom**
- *Nowhere* by **Adam Christie**
- *10 Days* by **Gregory Cruikshank**
- *Stencilboy and Other Portraits* by **Susanna Fournier**
- *Hero and Leander* by **Kevin Michael Shea** (book), **Wade Bogert-O'Brien** (lyrics) & **Scott Christian** (music)
- *Coachwood Park* by **Andrew Torry**

I Drag My Coffin . . . follows an RCMP constable as he tracks his elusive prey: a mysterious trapper who murdered a fellow officer, and fled over the frozen tundra.

The play was highly praised by the Competition's prestigious panel of jurors, **Katrina Dunn**, Artistic Director of Touchstone Theatre (Vancouver), **Yvette Nolan**, Artistic Director of Native Earth Performing Arts (Toronto) and **Roy Surette**, Artistic Director of Centaur Theatre (Montreal).

Roy Surette observed that the play is "*highly theatrical with some powerful imagery*", while Yvette Nolan remarked "*I like the ambition of the piece. Matthew really gets at the feel of the north, the magic, the mystery, the awe-inspiring nature of it*". Katrina Dunn called it, "*A fascinating piece of Canadian gothic. Psychologically complex and compelling in its storytelling.*"

Winner **Matthew Heiti** will receive a cash prize of **\$3,000** as well as a timeslot to showcase his play in Tarragon Theatre's annual **Play Reading Week** in November 2010.

Born in Sudbury, Ontario, **Matthew Heiti** studied acting at Ryerson University and just completed his Masters in Creative Writing at the University of New Brunswick. He is one of the founding members of the Sudbury-based Unweeded Garden Theatre Company, dedicated to producing work by Northern writers.

Matthew's plays have been workshopped with Playwrights Theatre Centre (Vancouver), Lunchbox Theatre (Calgary), and NotaBle Acts (Fredericton). His folk musical, *The Nick Drake Project*, was produced by Picture Box Theatre at the Summerworks Festival last year. He is also the co-writer of the film *Son of the Sunshine*, which debuted at Slamdance and will be playing in Canadian cinemas this fall.

Matthew is currently working on a dark comedy about the nickel pits of Northern Ontario.

Upon being named the winner of the RBC Tarragon Under 30 National Playwriting Competition, Matthew remarked "*I am honoured to have been chosen as the winner of the RBC Tarragon Under 30 Playwriting*

Competition. . . This award, and others like it, is vital in the development of a new generation of dying-to-be writers who find that the stage can sometimes feel so far away from the page. . . This award also offers a brief chance to step away from this endless lonely tapping and tell the story – which, for me, is what it's all about.” Matthew will be in Toronto for his November reading.

The RBC Tarragon Under 30 National Playwriting Competition is generously supported by the RBC Foundation. The RBC Emerging Artists Support Project helps young artists, such as dancers, painters, writers, musicians and singers bridge the gap from the academic to the professional world. Currently, RBC supports over 30 organizations across Canada that inspire and educate the next generation of stars. In 2008, RBC committed \$785,000 to support the RBC Emerging Artist Project.

Shari Austin, RBC's Vice President of Corporate Citizenship and Executive Director of RBC Foundation, praised Tarragon Theatre for its imaginative programming and partnerships. *“RBC's arts support is pillared on long-term partnerships with mostly national organizations which help bridge the gap from academic excellence to professional careers in all aspects of the arts,”* she said. *“Tarragon Theatre is recognized as a leader in presenting the best new Canadian works; through this partnership we can help them identify and nurture the next generation of playwrights.”*

Tarragon Theatre wishes to acknowledge the ongoing support of the RBC Foundation.

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