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**Media Release and photos attached**

## **Managing Artistic Director Kim Blackwell marks 25 years at 4th Line Theatre**

This season marks the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Managing Artistic Director Kim Blackwell's involvement at 4th Line Theatre. Since the very beginning, Blackwell has been an integral part of 4th Line and shepherding the organization to its current status as one of the most unique theatre companies in the country.

Growing up in Peterborough, Blackwell fell in love with theatre very early in life. Blackwell first heard about, what would eventually become, 4th Line Theatre after getting a part in a play at the now legendary Union Theatre on Hunter Street in Peterborough. This was 1992, the year that Robert Winslow presented the first performances of *The Cavan Blazers* at the Winslow farm.

4th Line Founder and Creative Director, Robert Winslow, says of his longtime collaborator, "She is a force of creative energy. Kim has given a quarter of a century to 4th Line Theatre and I thank her from the bottom of my heart for her significant contributions."

As Blackwell reflects on her time at 4th Line, she most remembers the scores of people who helped the theatre along the way, "Right from those early years, the key to 4th Line's success is the teams of people who have worked in this organization to make it successful. I feel so lucky to have worked with so many divergent people from various walks of life: senior artists and community people, the children we have worked with and the administrators. It really is amazing."

In 2001, Robert Winslow made Blackwell an Artistic Associate at the theatre and she soon directed her first production at 4th Line, 2002's *Gimme That Prime Time Religion*, following it up next year with Ryan Kerr's *Attrition*.

Blackwell's hard work has been recognized over her 25-year career: she was nominated for the John Hirsch Award for Directing Excellence in 2009 (Canada Council) and 2014 (Ontario Arts Council). She was the winner of a 2013 KETS Award for "People Who Rock Our World." She was the only Canadian invited to train with Felix Barrett, the renowned Artistic Director of *Punchdrunk (Sleep No More)* in his immersive and promenade theatre style. She was inducted into Peterborough's Pathway of Fame in September 2016.

In 2014, Robert Winslow and 4th Line's Board of Directors made the decision to appoint Kim Managing Artistic Director of the theatre. When asked about his reflections on Kim's work, John May, Chairperson of 4th Line's Board of Directors expressed his admiration of her, saying, "Kim has constantly and clearly

demonstrated to me, without exception, an unfettered willingness to work hard, to apply unerring skill and insight to the tasks presented to her, to calm ruffled feathers when needs be and most significantly to insist upon and realize creative vision and artistic integrity. It remains one of the joys of my life to be privileged to work with her.”

Blackwell is a dedicated dramaturge. She has added enormously to the development of a body of work by Canadian playwrights. Trent University Professor Emeritus and playwright Ian McLachlan says of her, “What I appreciate most about Kim, above everything else, is her intense respect for the script, for the word as it is written. This gives a wonderful, and quite unusual, feeling of security to the writer.”

Playwright Drew Hayden Taylor remarks, “Her perspective and her understanding of comedic timing, made the 4th Line production of my little play, *The Berlin Blues*, one of the best that have been produced.”

Actor, musician and playwright Beau Dixon explains, “With her guidance, patience and determination — Kim helped cultivate my craft and gave me a safe platform to explore and grow as an artist. As a director, she's fearless, articulate and insightful. She is a fierce leader with relentless passion for producing provocative Canadian theatre.”

Blackwell is passionate about her work with local actors. Mark Hiscox, longtime actor and 4th Line collaborator remarks, “I simply would not be where I am today without Kim. She had a belief in me before I had a belief in myself.”

Actor and director Linda Kash says of Blackwell, “As a director, Kim Blackwell manages to pull the seemingly impossible together: braving the natural elements; leading an enormous cast with a wide spectrum of experience; demanding professionalism; and all the while, maintaining a great sense of humour. She not only helps to tell meaningful, original and local stories, but also makes the experience of the telling itself meaningful.”

Playwright Alex Poch-Goldin says of Blackwell, “She is a dedicated and driven theatre-maker, passionate about her work, the work of the artists she develops and the Canadian theatre scene in general. Kim’s leadership as Artistic Director and a director at 4th Line has galvanized it into an essential and iconic institution, unique in the Canadian landscape, where history comes to life and reflects contemporary issues.”

Renowned playwright Judith Thompson says of her experience working with Blackwell, “She is one of the major voices in Canadian Theatre. Her work at 4th Line as Artistic Director is brilliant, fully respecting 4th Line traditions while helping the theatre to grow creatively and reach wider audiences. Kim Blackwell directed my play, *Who Killed Snow White?* at 4th Line and as a playwright with 35 years experience, I can say that this was my finest experience with a director. She has a profound understanding of the space, the professional actors and the volunteers and most importantly the play. Kim is a woman of strong convictions and her principles shine through in every work she directs.”

Blackwell’s next directing challenge will be the highly anticipated world premiere of Beau Dixon’s ***Bloom: A Rock ‘n’ Roll Fable***, opening at the Winslow farm on July 4<sup>th</sup>.

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Tickets, gift certificates and picnics for 4th Line Theatre productions can be purchased by phone (705-932-4445), online at [4thlinetheatre.on.ca](http://4thlinetheatre.on.ca), or at **4th Line Theatre’s Box Office** at 4 Tupper Street,

Millbrook or at our ticket outlet the **Peterborough Museum and Archives** at 300 Hunter Street E., Museum Drive, Peterborough.

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### Attached Photos:

1. Kim Blackwell - 4th Line Theatre's Managing Artistic Director 4th Line Theatre
2. Kim Blackwell (centre), directing at the Winslow farm

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