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**Artistic Director Bob Baker appoints
Governor-General Award winner
Vern Thiessen as *Playwright in Residence*
at the Citadel Theatre**

EDMONTON, AB – As part of his ongoing commitment to develop and produce original, Canadian theatre, Citadel Theatre Artistic Director **Bob Baker** has appointed Canadian playwright, and Governor-General Award winner in Drama **Vern Thiessen**, as *Playwright in Residence* at the Citadel Theatre.

“We are very pleased that Vern has accepted this position,” says Mr. Baker. “As his career continues to sky-rocket, it’s great to keep our connection and to provide whatever support we can towards his creative endeavours.”

Vern Thiessen is fast becoming one of Canada’s most produced playwrights. He has written for stage, radio and television. His stage plays have been seen across Canada, the US and Europe, including *Shakespeare’s Will*; *Apple*; *Einstein’s Gift*; *Blowfish* and *The Resurrection Of John Frum*. *Apple* has been running at several theatres in Poland for over eighteen months, and recently completed successful runs in Toronto and Winnipeg. *Einstein’s Gift*, which premiered at the Citadel during the 2002-2003 Season, has been seen across Canada, had a highly successful off-Broadway run, and has been translated into several languages. *Shakespeare’s Will*, which also premiered at the Citadel during the 2004-2005 Season, has had several productions across Canada and the US. Next summer, it will play the Stratford Festival of Canada, and has recently been optioned by legendary New York producer Chase Mishkin for a Broadway production. Mr. Thiessen’s new play *Bird Brain* will premiere at the Citadel in March of 2007.

Mr. Thiessen has been the recipient of numerous awards, including the Governor-General Literary Award, Canada’s highest honour for playwriting; Elizabeth Sterling Haynes Award for Outstanding New Play; The City of Edmonton Arts Achievement Award; the University of Alberta Alumni Award for Excellence and The Canadian Jewish Playwriting Competition. Last fall, he was nominated for the prestigious Siminovitch Prize in Theatre. He was also honoured this year in Theatre 100, a listing of the top 100 theatre professionals to make a significant contribution to Alberta Theatre in the last century.

Vern received his BA from the University of Winnipeg and an MFA from the University of Alberta. He has served as Playwright in Residence at Workshop West Theatre (where he founded the Playwrights Garage program), the University of Alberta, and The Blue Heron Theatre in New York City. For five seasons, he was the Artistic Associate of Play Development at the Citadel Theatre in Edmonton. He is Past President of both the Playwrights Guild of Canada and the Writer’s Guild of Alberta.

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Vern is currently working on several new plays including *Somewhere at Vimy*; an adaptation of *Wuthering Heights*; a new play for teens written for Manitoba Theatre for Young People and a new play for Epic Theatre Centre in New York.

Vern is thrilled to be named *Playwright in Residence* at the Citadel. "I always think of the Citadel as my home", says Mr. Thiessen. "They have premiered my last three plays, and I look forward to writing more for them in the future. The residency allows me to concentrate on finishing a number of plays I have been working on."

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