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**TOURISM BARRIE AND THEATRE BY THE BAY WIN
MAYOR'S INNOVATION AWARD FOR CREATIVE COLLABORATION**

BARRIE, ON. Theatre by the Bay (TBTB) and Tourism Barrie are thrilled to announce that their collaboration on the augmented reality production, *The Ghost Watchers*, was recognized with the 2021 Mayor's Innovation Award for 'Creative Collaboration' during last week's ceremonies.

After experiencing a steep downturn in the tourism and performing arts sectors due to the pandemic, the two organizations set out to collaborate on a way to bring theatre and tourism back to Barrie. TBTB Board Member and Tourism Barrie videographer, Michael Whyte, proposed an augmented reality ghost tour in downtown Barrie.

Combining the creativity of Theatre by the Bay and the reach and assets of Tourism Barrie, *The Ghost Watchers* provided a covid-safe and unique theatrical experience for tourists and residents alike during the summer of 2021. The project was both a critical and commercial success with theatre reviewer Lynn Slotkin describing it as: "a fascinating endeavor that is part history, part technological wizardry, and totally entertaining and moving."

"I am delighted and honoured to have our collaboration recognized in this way" says TBTB Artistic Director, Iain Moggach. "Tourism Barrie throughout has been a wonderful partner, and this project shows that by finding common ground and working as a community, amazing things can happen."

The Mayor's Innovation Awards, which marked its fourth year this year, is an annual initiative celebrating and recognizing the year's most creative solutions from businesses, individuals, and community groups in Barrie. Nominees and finalists are evaluated by more than 20 judges across all four categories from the region and province. The 'Creative Collaboration Award' marks Theatre by the Bay's second Mayor's Innovation Award, after having been recognized as Barrie's 'Most Innovative Not-for-Profit Organization' in 2019.

Tourism Barrie and Theatre by the Bay would like to thank the team that made the project a reality, the Mayor's office, as well as the judges and sponsors who made this event and achievement possible. They would also like to recognize their amazing fellow finalists - UPLift Black and the Henry Bernick Entrepreneurship Centre as well as Talk is Free Theatre.

THEATRE BY THE BAY

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