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What's cooking for this season?

We have several projects on the menu. While it's difficult to know what the final result will be, here's a taste of what the future might hold.

Bob Sarti is completing a new musical called: *Yippies - A Love Story*. Bill Sample has been asked to write the music and Jay has been involved in the dramaturgical process. We are also considering a re-mount/co-production of *Bruce - The Musical* in response to audience members who could not get enough or missed seeing it altogether. (We literally ran out of chairs - one was given to a small dog!)

Mythical Voices for Our Time - has turned into an ongoing five to possibly six year project: There are many good scripts still "sitting on the back burner". These could be produced as part of another One-Act Festival when time, venue and

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"Raw, absurd and relevant... But Theatre In the Raw soldiers on"



Left to right: Paul Beckett as Oedipus Rex, Sindy Angel as General Barbaro, Olivier Oudry as a Soldier and James Behenna as Vatzlav (under chair). Photo: Colin Xavier © 2009

By Stuart Derdeyn, The Province - December 7, 2009

Polish playwright Slawomir Mrozek's 1968 work *Vatzlav* marks a high point in the oft-censured political journalist's career. While 1964's *Tango* and 1975's *The Immigrants* are the most often mounted of his many plays, with *Vatzlav*, his pen is perhaps at its most sharply absurdist and tragicomic.

There is nary a moment of humour in the piece that doesn't turn somehow political.

Like life under the totalitarian regime of pre-Berlin-Wall-collapse Poland, there is rarely

a moment without multiple meanings. Power structures exist in a number of distasteful and crude combinations and frequently get intertwined. But what links a family with a grown son who wears diapers and also happens to be a bear, a father named Genius whose daughter Justice must be "revealed," and no less than Oedipus Rex in the guise of an old blind keeper of the truth has to a slave who has washed up on the shore of a strange island is explained in the play's 77 scenes. Acting out those scenes are 13 actors - and a prop baby.

Yes, you read that correctly. This work packs in 77 scenes into a mere 120 minutes.

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Vatzlav and the Ouch! - Art's Cuts

Jay's message on producing a play currently in BC

Vatzlav by Slawomir Mrozek, was suggested to the company by actor, singer and close friend Paul Beckett a number of years ago. It was proposed to the TITR Board numerous times. It received approval each time but it was not produced. Finally, eight years later, during one of the most challenging crunched financial years to face the

arts scene in British Columbia, we mounted the play for a two week run at Studio 16 on Granville Street in Vancouver. The play is absurd, contradictory and sadly it rings true to current, politics, fears, desires, and the obstacles that face artists today attempting to do their work. Mrozek says,

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In Memory of Diana Knowles...

We recently learned of the passing of a very dear and old friend, not only to our theatre but to some founding members of the troupe. Diana was a long-time supporter of Theatre In the Raw and had a keen interest in our one-act play writing department. She introduced the theatre to issues of deep concern related to First Nations Peoples. We will sorely miss her; her creativity and spirit that now leave a hole in our daily lives. •



Continued from page one...

Jay's message on producing a play currently in BC

"Thanks to reason, everything can be set straight, for the world is reasonable," as his characters search for some semblance of order within the chaos. I believe, after working on this show, that Mrozek was prophetic, when Vatzlav states, "I've heard a whole people passed through the sea and reached the other shore without getting wet."

The Berlin Wall fell in 1989, twenty years almost to the day of our production. Then the world celebrated the demise of one of the most complex, infamous and oppressive political structures. *Vatzlav* had been censored in Poland for many years. The play (written in '68/'69) came directly out of political turmoil and tyranny that we have never encountered in Canada, although there are events that make us feel we understand. We need to be reminded that we can't afford to take our freedoms for granted, that cuts to the arts are also cuts to the throats of artists' voices. We did this play in honour of many a tenacious artist and writer who inspires us to continue through the absurdities of our own existence. In BC, we move forward on will, faith and with a keen interest in expressing ourselves true to the heart. For many in the arts, the heartless budget cuts have been devastating, leaving many of us scrambling for a way to keep our arts organizations afloat. The question is how many will make it to *the other shore*?

"I got a blister on my left foot and I can feel one coming on my right foot..." says the limping Quail in *Vatzlav*. Like him we keep moving forward...seeking answers and strategies that will help keep a live theatre alive for the future. •

"The Case for Subsidy" from the forward to *The Necessary Theatre* by Peter Hall

"The theatre as nearly always been subsidized by somebody; the king, the court, the church, the State. The support has often been somewhat hesitant because authority never wholly trusts the theatre: it asks too many awkward questions. It is an instrument of change; it does not normally preserve the status quo. It frequently produces a live debate that frees the imagination and provokes the public to ask questions. It is therefore dangerous." •

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Raw, absurd and relevant... *Vatzlav*

"Some scenes are as quick as one word, however," says Paul Beckett, who plays Oedipus. "The crazy thing is, they all matter."

"It's incredibly relevant to today's world because the absurdity of it is all around us in the present day," adds Jay Hamburger, who, for the past 15 years, has specialized in "giving exposure to voices seldom heard" through Theatre in the Raw.

From works by Gogol to original new plays such as the hit *Bruce - The Musical*, the East Side company has produced 10 full-length works, including five original Canadian premieres and toured a number of one-acts across the country. It's specialty is in art that makes a point at a time when too little does. The company recently had all of its provincial funding axed. This hasn't stopped it from soldiering on and bringing emerging talents such as recent Studio 58 grad Emily Rowed into the fold.

"I play the role of Justice, who is lied to and betrayed by her father [played by Hamburger] and, ultimately, comes to see the world tragically," says Rowed.

This exposure to the truth ties in with a burlesque dance number central to the storyline.

Musician Earle Peach composed the original music for *Vatzlav* and Hamburger put his pen to paper for the lyrics. This wasn't unfamiliar territory for him. Hamburger wrote lyrics for some tunes in the classic musical *Godspell* that still brings in royalties. He says that these have had to be dipped into to make this production come to be.

But it's worth it for such "an absurdist tour de force to be seen locally." •

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What's cookin'...

finances will allow. We usually alternate original works with classics that are not often performed. We are currently looking at works by William Saroyan, George S. Kaufman or Bertolt Brecht/Kurt Weill's great musical, *The Threepenny Opera*. Our fundraising team is hard at work on a possible co-production of *Vatzlav* for a provincial or international tour down the road. •

Student Instructor Partnership - a first for Raw

A recent breakthrough for the theatre, was a student-instructor partnership with actors Emily Rowed, Jane Tian, and Olivier Oudry in the production run of *Vatzlav* at Studio 16. All three actors are recent students of theatre schools and courses. Emily just graduated from Studio 58 Langara College Theatre School, Jane and Olivier have been taking VSB Continuing Ed Acting courses. We welcome the interest and talents of such theatre artists and hope there will be more to come with our future production work. •

On the Road with the Rolling Stock Prairie Theatre Tour!

During the summer of 2008, Theatre In the Raw embarked on one of its most ambitious projects to date. Presenting three original Canadian one-acts, *You Are What You Eat*, by Patrick Foley (Vancouver, BC) to *the*

Queen, by Larry Trask (Nipawin, Saskatchewan) and *A Hot Box*, by our own Jay Hamburger.

The talented hard-working troupe: Maria Lakes, Serge Saika, zi paris, Jay Hamburger, Steve Duncan, Michelle Richard and Roger Howie were honoured to have played some of the most interesting venues in four western provinces. Those venues were:

The PAL Theatre in Vancouver; The Templeton Studio Cabaret (in the Globe Theatre) in Regina; The Colin Jackson Studio (Prairie Theatre Exchange) and Ragpickers Anti-Fashion Emporium in Winnipeg; The Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company in Saskatoon; The Third Space (Northern Light Theatre) in Edmonton and the Motel (One Yellow Rabbit Theatre) in Calgary.

The tour was a great way for a small very gifted company of actors to see what's going on with theatre outside of their own Vancouver area. It was also a great opportunity for those who saw the shows to become acquainted not only with what Theatre In the Raw is doing but what is coming from the West Coast in relation to the spoken word.

We received good press from the Edmonton Vue Weekly, The Edmonton Journal, The Regina Leader-Post and The Jewish Independent, out of Vancouver. Steve Duncan (who travelled as our techie) posted an "on-the-road" blog featuring YouTube videos, photos and lots more. Check our website for links to the articles and the tour blog.

We wish to offer one great big thanks to all who came out to the shows and supported live grassroots independent touring theatre. •

Got some Raw talent?

Artistic Director Jay Hamburger can be found teaching theatre at Bonsor Recreation Complex, VSB Continuing Ed and the Roundhouse Community Centre. Courses are at bargain prices, worth the time and effort to gain experience and further knowledge of what the craft of theatre is all about. To register, contact each of the above Centre's website or brochure.

We're also planning to offer future theatre workshop intensives on various aspects of theatre. Let us know if you'd be interested in participating. Stay tuned for more info at www.theatreintheraw.ca •



Raw at Work Adjudicating 6th 2009 Biennial One-Act Play Writing Contest

Theatre In the Raw's 6th Biennial 2009 One-Act Play Writing Contest received 17 fresh and exciting original scripts. We are working with our four contest adjudicators to pick our winners to be announced in 2010.

Our biennial playwrighting contest allows us to fulfill our mandate "...dedicated to artistic grassroots theatre in the Lower Mainland of Vancouver, as well as to presentations beyond B.C. borders. We are risk takers, creating and responding to the cultural needs of those in the Canadian and International community. We want to provide an open, creative, and supportive atmosphere for struggling artists and give exposure to tried and untried playwrights."

Every two years we receive many distinct and innovative plays from all over Canada and the world. We then commit to dramaturgical consultation one-acts selected for stage/radio production. Some of the winning plays from our 2007 contest were presented during our Festival of Mythical Plays & Winning One-Acts mini-tour. •

Our 5th Biennial 2007 Play Writing Contest Winners!

Thank you to all playwrights that submitted — We read all 39 plays and below are listed the 2007 winners:

First Choice \$150: *Bel Canto* by Virginia Hayden

Second Choice \$75: *Nuclear Fall-In* by Ed Ballou; *Saint Ed* by Ron Fromstein and *The Private Life of Jesus Christ* by David Sard.

Third Choice \$50: *Tombola!* by Lia Como; *Dystopia* by Alex Karolyi and *Barbed-wire Minute* by Krista Knight.

Honourable Mentions: *The Oracle and the Scribe* by Anthony Arnold and *Family Differences* by Dora M. Sanders.

Social Issues Script Recognition: *Just Another School Shooting* by Gerald Arthur Moore; *The Homecoming* by Satish Pendharkar and *Destroying Mt. St. Helen's* by Rebecca Wohlgemuth. •

The Raw Times is written by Jay Hamburger, Atty Gell, Norah Holtby and carol weaver. Original drawings by Atty Gell, Sylvan Hamburger and Maurice Spira. Layout design by: www.carolweavercreative.com. Join our Facebook Group (search FB groups, "Theatre In the Raw") and follow us on Twitter @ www.twitter.com/intherawtheatre.

Our website is www.theatreintheraw.ca •

Mythical Voices for Our Time & Festival of Mythical Plays & Winning One-Acts Mini-Tour

In June and July of 2009 we produced *The Festival of Mythical Plays and Winning One-Acts*. From that production two original one-acts

came from our *Mythical Voices for Our Time* project, which we had been working on since late 2005.

We chose this project because we wanted to bring together writers from various, social, economic and ethnic backgrounds. The playwrights were asked to write a one-act play or radio-play based on and related to their culture's myths. To take it a step even further, we asked writers to personalize their myth and if possible, modernize it in some way.

The Festival of Mythical Plays and Winning One-Acts supports Theatre In the Raw's mission to develop playwrights and new playworks. We developed, dramaturged nearly from "scratch" a number of these one-acts with three to four experienced theatre consultants who helped to get the plays ready to be performed. Some of the plays presented came from the *Mythical...* project as well as winners from our 2007 Biennial One-Act Playwriting Contest.

For the record we produced and performed four original myth one-acts at nine different venues in Vancouver, BC, 2006-2009. Those plays were:

Bonsai Friend by Petronella van Oyen, *The Toe Cutter* by Bill Pollett, *The Telling of the Bees* by Jesse Matthew Cooper and *Jack Benny & the Angels* by Jason Logan.

All the one-acts were broadcast over Co-op Radio's *Arts Rational* program: and given extensive stage readings. *Telling of the Bees* was also fully staged.

There are 11 writers whose plays were not produced that were submitted for *Mythical Voices for our Time* plays project. The venture has proved to be most fascinating and very rewarding.

We look forward if time, finances permit to present more of these myth one-acts at a later date.

We were excited to have the privilege to tour the lower mainland once again. (including Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Burnaby, Vancouver).

With this project we have produced 4 original one-act mythical plays over a 4-5 year period. If time, funds and patience allows there are a number of other original mythical one-act scripts from this project waiting in the wings to be produced.

Thank you to everyone who came out to see the shows and to those that submitted plays – we really appreciate your ongoing support! •



Above: Ken Boyd as Jack Benny & Michelle Weisbom as Hoochie Mama - photo by Atty Gell © 2009

Thank you ALL for your wonderful Support...

Theatre In the Raw (TITR) has produced live theatre in BC, western Canada and Washington State. We are proud to have received funding from: Canada Council for the Arts (Theatre Sec.); Vancouver Foundation; Hamber Foundation; City of Vancouver - Office of Cultural Affairs (Theatre Sec.); BC Arts Council (Theatre Program); McLean Foundation; Koerner Foundation; Arts POD (Vancouver Arts Stabilization Team); CCEC Credit Union; Vancity Credit Union (Community Partnership Programs); CP (Concord Pacific) Charitable Trust One; BC Gaming Commission; TITR and many wonderful donations from individual theatre and anonymous supporters.

Theatre In the Raw's Board of Directors; Jan Blanchet, Edith Iglauer Daly, Roger Howie, Lori Jovick Liu, Paul Manson, Kathy Odgers and Don Todd; Vancouver School Board Continuing Education Theatre Class, Libby Davies, Mary Hyland, Monica Normandeau for the mask particulars, Isabell Eileen Mayer, Rona MacDonald, Merryn Edwards, Jeff Sommers, Carol O'Dell & Associates, Katarzyna Juraczko and the Vancouver Polish Community, The Consulate General of the Republic of Poland, Studio 58 Theatre @ Langara College and Kathryn Shaw, Andrzej Jar of the Polish Literary Magazine AHA!, Paul Beckett, Marie Bourgeois for her kindness and understanding and Claude both of Studio 16, Jennifer Riedle of Canadian Actors' Equity, Ray Viaud of People's Co-op Bookstore, Lee Johnson and Christina Plewes of Coffee News, Joanne Mackinnon of CCEC Credit Union, Jim Lipkowitz of the Columbia Journal, Chris Fetterly of Colortec Screenprinting, Helesia Luke, Ena Salamon, Diane Sarti, Patsy & Muggs Sigurgeirson, Bob Sarti, Vancouver Moving Theatre - Terry & Savannah; Leila Bell, zi paris, Len Auclair, Edith Frankel, Sean Allan, Margrith Schraner, Krista Knight, Phil Schulze, Elwin Xie & Fanna Yee for her patience, Jan Janovick & Wally & all their friends who supplied props, Jenny Kwan, Anonymous x 2, Anne & Patrick Aubourg, the great Jimmy Chow of Budget Printing, Peter Gell & Family, Jay Hamburger & Family, Anne Hussey & Family, Edith Iglauer Daly & Frank White, John Field & June Malaka, Joe & Solveigh Harrison, Ann Hepper & Family, Carnegie Community Centre Theatre Workshop Participants, Vancouver Co-op Radio 102.7 FM - Arts Rational Program Collective, Gerry Kowalenko, Audrey McClellan, Jason Logan for consultation; the four patient adjudicators for the 2007 Biennial One-Act Playwriting Contest, Katrina Sedaros, Brenda Grunau, Ian Fenwick, Gwynne Hunt, Reiko Miki, Ehren Salazar & friends, The City of Vancouver Transit Shelter Advertising Program, Office of Cultural Affairs (CBS Outdoor/JC Decaux), our friends on facebook & twitter, Earle Peach, Steve Duncan, Norah Holtby, carol weaver, Atty Gell for all her wonderful support. And to the wonderful cast, crew & talented artists with TITR's recent One-Acts Mini-Tour and *Vatzlav* productions. •

Building on the Success of *Bruce – The Musical*

"...What polish! What energy! What feeling! In short, what a fabulous performance! We were totally knocked sideways." — Audience review

We were thrilled that our November 2009 production of Bob Sarti's "*Bruce – The Musical*" had the largest audience of any of our mainstage shows in the past 15 years. We presented 10 performances during the *Heart of the City Festival* at the historic Russian Hall in Strathcona. *Bruce* was also nominated as *Best New Work* at the 2009 Ovation Awards.

This musical extravaganza recreates events in the life of Bruce Eriksen, the late founder of the Downtown Eastside Residents Association (DERA). He was instrumental in transforming the image of Vancouver's lowest-income neighbourhood from Skid Road to a residential community. It is a story of tragedy and triumph, told with humour, action, and song.

The story takes place circa 1973-76, when Eriksen overcame his addiction to alcohol, became an Iron worker on the Knight Street Bridge project and then fought successfully to make the beer parlours and hotels of the Downtown Eastside safer for the old loggers and other retired resource workers who lived there. Later, he won a seat on city council, where he gave headaches to the NPA

dinosaurs.

A semi-pro/professional cast of eleven portrayed Eriksen and local legends, Libby Davies, Harry Rankin, Jean Swanson and the diverse and vibrant characters from the community. The actors were accompanied by a live jazz trio led by award-



Left to right: Anna Kuman as Jean Swanson, Steve Maddock as Bruce Eriksen and Kuei Min Lin as Mrs. Leung. from *Bruce - The Musical* by Bob Sarti - photo by Cindy Angel © 2008

winning composer Bill Sample under the direction of Jay Hamburger.

Raw pulled out all the stops when it came to publicizing the show. Taking advantage of the Provincial and Vancouver civic elections that happened in the weeks prior, Bob and other volunteers took it to the streets leafleting numerous All-Candidate Meetings with the now famous *Vote*

for *Bruce* flyer. It was guerrilla marketing at it's finest!

This production also marked the first time we were granted support from the City of Vancouver's Office of Cultural Affairs Transit Shelter Advertising Program. This provided placement of posters at 10 transit shelters. The promotion boosted ticket sales and widened our audience.

We were impressed with how well this original script aligned with our mandate of "*exposing voices seldom heard*". In this case it was the voice of a local Vancouver hero who stood up for marginalized citizens who are often forgotten and ignored. Bob Sarti's script recalls past and continuing issues. We are reminded that the disenfranchised can have a voice; that attention and support needs to be given to those of low income and homeless; that fatal dangers lurk out there for low income members that need to be recognized and acted upon before it is too late; that a heritage building (Carnegie Centre) had to be saved in order to establish a vital community building in the center of one of Canada's poorest postal codes. We found that there was an audience out there yearning to revisit a sense of community and to have many of these concerns addressed in an artistic manner.

Stay tuned for news of a possible remount to coincide with Bob's latest Vancouver-themed musical play - *Yipees - A Love Story*. •

FUNDRAISING 2010: We need a Jolt! Buy us a coffee to help us keep going...

Create a buzz... join our virtual cafe and help us stack the cups at www.theatreintheraw.ca! Despite being roasted by recent cut backs, Theatre In the Raw continues to brew up great shows that expose voices seldom heard on Vancouver stages. For the price of a few coffees, savour the warmth that comes from being a member of an independent live theatre society. For each donation, we'll help you create your own buzz by posting a live web link to promote your website, blog, project or business. It's a cheap easy way to send business your way and it's tax deductible! •



THEATRE IN THE RAW SOCIETY invites you to assist us in continuing our dream of producing live theatre. Be a part of an unusual, awakening and exchanging grassroots travelling theatre - "*Giving Exposure to Voices Seldom Heard*".

Annual Memberships are ONLY \$5 entitling members to the Theatre In the Raw newsletters, voting rights at the Annual General Meeting (held each Fall) and 2 collector theatre postcards. You can now make a donation and become a member of

Theatre In the Raw on our website at www.theatreintheraw.ca. Just click on our "Join & Donate" page – *Thank You!*

Other Donations

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Please make cheques payable to: **THEATRE IN THE RAW SOCIETY**
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THANK YOU! GO SEE SOME LIVE THEATRE TODAY!